



STEVIE SMITH  
SELECTED POEMS



*Edited with a Preface  
by James MacGibbon*

PENGUIN BOOKS



## CONTENTS

PREFACE	17
The Hound of Ulster	21
On the Death of a German Philosopher	22
Papa Love Baby	22
Bandol (Var)	23
Egocentric	23
Alfred the Great	24
Mrs Simpkins	25
How far can you Press a Poet?	26
To the Tune of the Coventry Carol	26
The Suburban Classes	27
Spanish School	27
Night-Time in the Cemetery	29
Alone in the Woods	29
God and the Devil	30
Es war einmal	31
Numbers	32
From the County Lunatic Asylum	33
The Bereaved Swan	33
Correspondence between Mr Harrison in Newcastle and Mr Sholto Peach Harrison in Hull	34
Nature and Free Animals	35
Eng.	35
Death Bereaves our Common Mother	
Nature Grieves for my Dead Brother	36
Bag-Snatching in Dublin	36
The River Deben	37
Death Came to Me	38
No Respect	39

The Reason	40
I Like to Play with Him	40
Analysand	41
Sunt Leones	42
Lord Mope	43
Never Again	44
Little Boy Lost	44
Angel of Grace	45
Freddy	46
Is it Wise?	47
This Englishwoman	48
Lord Barrenstock	48
Maximilian Esterhazy	50
Major Macroo	50
Private Means is Dead	51
Bereavement	52
Death of Mr Mounsel	53
Who Killed Lawless Lean?	53
Road Up	54
Mrs Osmosis	55
The Fugitive's Ride	55
Suburb	57
Beware the Man	59
Breughel	60
Tender Only to One	61
O Happy Dogs of England	61
Darling Daughters	62
The Bishops of the Church of England	62
Eulenspiegel	63
The Abominable Lake	64
One of Many	65
Death's Ostracism	65
The Boat	67
Parrot	67
The Doctor	68
I Hate this Girl	68
Infelice	69
Come, Death (I)	70

Silence and Tears	71
A Father for a Fool	72
Brickenden, Hertfordshire	72
The Murderer	74
Mother, among the Dustbins	74
Le Désert de l'Amour	75
To a Dead Vole	76
Reversionary	76
Dear Karl	76
In Canaan's Happy Land	78
Proud Death with Swelling Port	78
My Soul	79
Dear Female Heart	80
How Slowly Time Lengthens	80
The River Humber	81
La Gretchen de Nos Jours (I)	82
Nourish Me on an Egg	83
Souvenir de Monsieur Poop	83
Unser Vater	85
Gnädiges Fräulein	85
The Friend	86
The Lads of the Village	87
The Photograph	87
'... and the clouds return after the rain'	88
Out of Time	88
The Children of the Cross	90
Fallen, Fallen	90
Will Ever?	90
Little Boy Sick	91
The Violent Hand	92
Human Affection	92
A King in Funeral Procession	92
Murder	93
Girls!	94
Where are you going?	94
Autumn	95
Poet!	95
The Zoo	95

Advice to Young Children	97
The Face	97
If I lie down	98
Conviction (i)	98
Conviction (ii)	99
Conviction (iii)	99
Conviction (iv)	99
The Virtuoso	100
Villains	100
Le Majeur Ydow	100
The Little Daughters of America	101
She said . . .	101
Quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime, il faut aimer ce que l'on a —	101
The Conventionalist	101
Study to Deserve Death	102
Dirge	102
Distractions and the Human Crowd	103
Be off!	104
Love Me!	104
The Wild Dog	104
Lady 'Rogue' Singleton	105
Rencontres Funestes	105
The Film Star	106
The Bottle of Aspirins	106
The Governess	107
The Actress	108
The Devil-my-Wife	108
The Repentance of Lady T	108
The Smile	109
Forgot!	109
A Man I Am	110
The White Thought	111
In the Night	111
The Magic Morning	111
Après la Politique, la Haine des Bourbons	113
The Poets are Silent	113
The Pleasures of Friendship	113

Happiness	114
Lot's Wife	114
The Fool	115
No More People	115
Hast Du Dich Verirrt?	115
Satin-Clad	116
Unpopular, lonely and loving	116
'Ceci est digne de gens sans Dieu'	116
When the Sparrow Flies	116
Voices against England in the Night	117
'N'est-ce pas assez de ne me point haïr?'	118
The Failed Spirit	118
The Sliding Mountain	118
The Recluse	119
'I could let Tom go - but what about the children?'	119
Christmas	120
Torquemada	121
The Roman Road	121
The Castle	122
To Dean Inge Lecturing on Origen	123
Behind the Knight	123
Harold's Leap	124
A Mother's Hearse	124
Touch and Go	125
Man is a Spirit	127
Thought is Superior	128
The River God	128
Cool as a Cucumber	129
The Orphan Reformed	130
A Shooting Incident	130
'Oh stubborn race of Cadmus' seed ...'	134
The Ambassador	134
Persephone	134
Do Take Muriel Out	136
The Weak Monk	137
Le Singe Qui S'écrit	138
The Hee'	139



The After-thought	139
The Wanderer	140
No Categories!	141
The Deserter	142
I rode with my darling . . .	142
God and Man	143
Mr Over	144
My Cats	145
Drugs Made Pauline Vague	145
Our Bog is Dood	146
Wretched Woman	147
Lightly Bound	148
Le Revenant	148
To School!	148
To an American Publisher	149
The Rehearsal	149
Death-bed of a Financier	149
The Hat	149
The Ride	150
I Am	150
The Crown of Bays	151
A Jew is Angry with his Friend who does not Believe in Circumcision	153
From the Coptic	154
A Humane Materialist at the Burning of a Heretic	155
In Protocreation	155
Do Not!	156
The Death Sentence	157
The Commuted Sentence	157
The Celtic Fringe	158
The Leader	159
Oh, If Only . . .	160
Who Shot Eugenie?	160
Full Well I Know	162
Voices about the Princess Anemone	163
Deeply Morbid	163
The Ghost of Ware,	166

Not Waving but Drowning	167
The English Visitor	168
'What is she writing? Perhaps it will be good'	169
The Fairy Bell	169
The New Age	170
The Blue from Heaven	171
The Lady of the Well-Spring	173
The Queen and the Young Princess	175
A Dream of Comparison	175
My Hat	176
The Engine Drain	177
Saint Anthony and the Rose of Life	180
Anger's Freeing Power	181
Fafnir and the Knights	182
Songe d'Athalie	184
The Hostage	185
Away, Melancholy	187
Dido's Farewell to Aeneas	189
Childe Rolandine	189
The Jungle Husband	190
'Come on, Come back'	191
Why are the Clergy . . . ?	193
I Remember	193
But Murderous	194
This is Disgraceful and Abominable	194
God the Eater	196
God the Drinker	196
Will Man Ever Face Fact and not Feel Flat?	197
Every Lovely Limb's a Desolation	198
A Dream of Nourishment	199
The Airy Christ	200
It Filled my Heart with Love	201
I An Agnostic	201
II A Religious Man	202
Dear Little Sirmio	202
'Great Unaffected Vampires and the Moon'	203
The Celts	204
The Passing Cloud	205

Loin de l'Être	206
My Cat Major	207
Parents	208
To a Lady in a Train	209
Adelaide Abner	209
The English	210
King Hamlet's Ghost	211
At School	211
Can it Be?	214
The Old Sweet Dove of Wiveton	215
The Past	216
The Singing Cat	216
Longing for Death because of Feebleness	217
My Heart Goes Out	218
Look!	218
Who is this Who Howls and Mutters?	219
Magna est Veritas	220
The Light of Life	221
In the Park	221
Evangelie or The Figure of Literary Corruption, seeking Glory not Truth	223
Jumbo	223
The Choosers	224
The Occasional Yarrow	225
The Sorrowful Girl	225
The Starling	227
Die Lorelei	228
Farewell	229
Thoughts about the Person from Porlock	230
The Frog Prince	232
A House of Mercy	234
Avondale	235
Scorpion	236
Seymour and Chantelle or Un peu de vice	237
How do you see?	238
The Ass	243
A Soldier Dear to Us	246
The Forlorn Sea	249

Angel Boley	251
The Donkey	251
Cock-a-Do	255
Francesca in Winter	256
So to fitness come	257
The Sallow Bird	258
The Word	258
Nor We of Her to Him	259
Mrs Blow and Her Animals	260
Oh grateful colours, bright looks!	262
O Pug!	263
Archie and Tim	264
The Poet Him	266
The House of Over-Dew	268
The Galloping Cat	271
Hippy-Mo	276
Heptasyllables	277
Black March	277
Grave by a Holm-Oak	279
The Sea-widow	280
The Stroke	281
Come, Death (II)	282

INDEX OF TITLES	283
-----------------	-----

INDEX OF FIRST LINES	287
----------------------	-----



## PREFACE

STEVIE SMITH's first book, *Novel on Yellow Paper*, was published in 1936 when she was thirty-three. She had submitted a volume of poetry to Cape, the publishers, but they asked her to write a novel first and the poetry, *A Good Time Was Had By All*, followed the next year. Both were recognized for the original works they are, and her reputation grew slowly but steadily, rising to its peak at the time of her death at sixty-eight in 1971.

She was born in Hull, Yorkshire, and when she was three came with her mother and sister to live with her aunt in Palmers Green, London, eventually going to the North London Collegiate School for Girls, one of the late Victorian educational establishments that pioneered the idea that girls deserved as good a schooling as boys. She did not go to university and became a secretary in the magazine publishing company, Newnes, Pearson, where she continued to work until the early fifties, latterly as private secretary to Sir George Newnes and Sir Neville Pearson. She gave out that her work was never heavy. However, she did pick up good advice about investments and her estate showed that the advice must have been good, for her writing could not have made a major contribution to the reasonable sum she left.

She certainly seemed to have time to spare in her 'private office' to entertain her friends to tea and hot-buttered toast with strawberry jam – and conversation. I think her job amused her as the opening lines of *Novel on Yellow Paper* suggest: 'Beginning this book (not as they say "book" in our trade – they mean magazine) ...'

During all this period and until some ten years before her death, she lived with 'Aunt' (alone during all her maturity) and she ran the small house, a place of fascinatingly ugly décor, not a stick of which, as far as could be observed, had ever been changed since



She was small-boned and frail-looking and dressed with some care in a style of her own which had, at first sight, and specially when she aged, a 'little girl' look; but one soon saw that it was perfectly appropriate and never without dignity. With her dark, straight, page-boy hair and dark eyes set in a pale, mobile face, she could have an almost sprite-like appearance. But in repose, and particularly in profile, her fine-boned features were of a striking beauty that was never more apparent than when death approached.

*Novel on Yellow Paper* and her third and last novel, *The Holiday*, reveal much of her character, apart from her religious beliefs. I am not qualified to define them but her life-long attachment to the Church of England, in belief and unbelief, is evident in her poetry, as it was in her conversation, even when she spoke or wrote vehemently against it and professed herself an unbeliever. An old friend, the Reverend Gerard Irvine has this to say:

In religion Stevie was ambivalent: neither a believer, an unbeliever nor agnostic, but oddly all three at once. Intellectually she rejected the dogmas of her high Anglican background, as unreasonable and morally inferior. But she had an obsessive concern with them. She demanded a maximizing faith to reject; she was scornful of what she considered watered-down reformulations of the faith, and disgusted by their liturgical expression. One could say that she did not like the God of Christian orthodoxy, but she could not disregard Him or ever quite bring herself to disbelieve in Him.

She did not believe, however, that suicide was necessarily wrong, and often discussed the possibility for herself, should life, mentally or physically, become intolerable. Indeed, death probably held less fear for her than most: she had come to terms with it as her 'gentle friend', in the manner of the metaphysical poets. Her last poem, *Come Death* (the second of that title), was written after she became fatally ill and, although she had lost her power of speech some weeks before her blessedly unprotracted death from brain tumour, she made it clear she did not wish her life to be prolonged, handing me the typescript of that poem with the word 'death' encircled.

What I am sure gave her particular pleasure in the last decade of



her life was the increasing demands made on her to give poetry readings, not just to societies but in schools. She had been acclaimed by the generation before her (the doyen of the London literary critics, Desmond MacCarthy, wrote 'she has a little nugget of genius'), by her contemporaries of course, and latterly, and more so than ever, by the new generation.

This new collection of Stevie Smith's poems has been selected from her complete poems, published in 1975. The choice is inevitably a subjective, even an arbitrary one, but my broad guidelines were to omit poems that were somewhat repetitive or unoriginal (in terms of a poet who was notably original) and the occasional trivia. It was an invidious task that was only undertaken to keep the length of the book within economic limits and in the knowledge that all her work is preserved in the collected poems. Inevitably many poems of merit and interest have had to be omitted from this edition, but perhaps it will direct readers to the complete collection.

Since 1977 her work has become familiar to many thousands, who might otherwise have missed it, through the success of Hugh Whitemore's play, *Stevie*, in which Glenda Jackson acted and spoke the poetry so brilliantly.

James MacGibbon

## THE HOUND OF ULSTER

Little boy  
Will you stop  
And take a look  
In the puppy shop –  
Dogs blue and liver  
Noses aquiver  
Little dogs big dogs  
Dogs for sport and pleasure  
Fat dogs meagre dogs  
Dogs for lap and leisure.  
Do you see that wire-haired terrier?  
Could anything be merrier?  
Do you see that Labrador retriever?  
His name is Belvoir.  
    Thank you courteous stranger, said the child,  
    By your words I am beguiled,  
    But tell me I pray  
    What lurks in the gray  
    Cold shadows at the back of the shop?  
Little boy do not stop  
Come away  
From the puppy shop.  
For the Hound of Ulster lies tethered there  
Cuchulain tethered by his golden hair  
His eyes are closed and his lips are pale  
Hurry little boy he is not for sale.

## ON THE DEATH OF A GERMAN PHILOSOPHER

He wrote *The I and the It*  
He wrote *The It and the Me*  
He died at Marienbad  
And now we are all at sea.

## PAPA LOVE BABY

My mother was a romantic girl  
So she had to marry a man with his hair in curl  
Who subsequently became my unrespected papa,  
But that was a long time ago now.

What folly it is that daughters are always supposed to be  
In love with papa. It wasn't the case with me  
I couldn't take to him at all  
But he took to me  
What a sad fate to befall  
A child of three.

I sat upright in my baby carriage  
And wished mama hadn't made such a foolish marriage.  
I tried to hide it, but it showed in my eyes unfortunately  
And a fortnight later papa ran away to sea.

He used to come home on leave  
It was always the same  
I could not grieve  
But I think I was somewhat to blame.

## BANDOL (VAR)

Bandol (Var)

In the south of France, my dear,  
Is full of most awfully queer  
Majors of the British Army, retired.

They live in boats tied up to the quay  
(No income tax, no port dues here you see).

And they're always trying to buy or to sell each other things  
And they hope what they lose on the roundabouts they'll  
make on the swings.

And they say  
Quite in the best stage-army traditional way:  
'England was quite a good place to live in before the War  
Hawkahaw.'  
They all seem to have got catarrh.

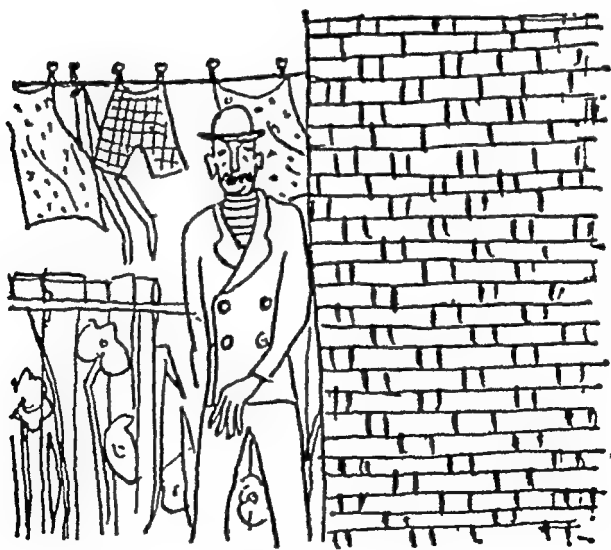
Bandol (Var)  
How picturesque you are.

## EGOCENTRIC

What care I if good God be  
If he be not good to me,  
If he will not hear my cry  
Nor heed my melancholy midnight sigh?  
What care I if he created Lamb,  
And golden Lion, and mud-delighting Clam,  
And Tiger stepping out on padded toe,  
And the fecund earth the Blindworms know?

He made the Sun, the Moon and every Star,  
He made the infant Owl and the Baboon,  
He made the ruby-orbed Pelican,  
He made all silent inhumanity,  
Nescient and quiescent to his will,  
Unquickened by the questing conscious flame  
That is my glory and my bitter bane.  
What care I if Skies are blue,  
If God created Gnat and Gnu,  
What care I if good God be  
If he be not good to me?

### ALFRED THE GREAT



Honour and magnify this man of men  
Who keeps a wife and seven children on £2 10  
Paid weekly in an envelope  
And yet he never has abandoned home.

## MRS SIMPKINS

Mrs Simpkins never had very much to do  
So it occurred to her one day that the Trinity wasn't true  
Or at least but a garbled version of the truth  
And that things had moved very far since the days of her youth.  
So she became a spiritualist and at her very first party  
Just to give her a feeling of confidence the spirit spoke up hearty:  
'Since I crossed over dear friends' it said 'I'm no different to what  
I was before  
Death's not a separation or alteration or parting it's just a  
one-handed door  
We spirits can come back to you if your seance is orthodox  
But you can't come over to us till your body's shut in a box  
And this is the great thought I want to leave with you today  
You've heard it before but in case you forgot death isn't a passing  
away  
It's just a carrying on with friends relations and brightness  
Only you don't have to bother with sickness and there's no  
financial tightness'  
Mrs Simpkins went home and told her husband he was a weak  
pated fellow  
And when he heard the news he turned a daffodil shade of yellow  
'What do you mean, Maria?' he cried, 'it can't be true there's no  
rest  
From one's uncles and brothers and sisters nor even the wife of  
one's breast?'  
'It's the truth,' Mrs Simpkins affirmed, 'there is no separation  
There's a great reunion coming for which this life's but a  
preparation.'  
This worked him to such a pitch that he shot himself through the  
head  
And now she has to polish the floors of Westminster County Hall  
for her daily bread.

## HOW FAR CAN YOU PRESS A POET?

How far can you press a poet?  
To the last limit and he'll not show it  
And one step further and he's dead  
And his death is upon your head.

## TO THE TUNE OF THE COVENTRY CAROL

The nearly right  
And yet not quite  
In love is wholly evil  
And every heart  
That loves in part  
Is mortgaged to the devil.

I loved or thought  
I loved in sort  
Was this to love akin  
To take the best  
And leave the rest  
And let the devil in?

O lovers true  
And others too  
Whose best is only better  
Take my advice  
Shun compromise  
Forget him and forget her.

## THE SUBURBAN CLASSES

There is far too much of the suburban classes  
Spiritually not geographically speaking. They're asses  
Menacing the greatness of our beloved England, they lie  
Propagating their kind in an eightroomed sty.  
Now I have a plan which I will enfold  
(There's this to be said for them, they do as they're told)  
Then tell them their country's in mortal peril  
They believed it before and again will not cavil  
Put it in caption form firm and slick  
If they see it in print it is bound to stick:  
'Your King and your Country need you Dead'  
You see the idea? Well, let it spread  
Have a suitable drug under string and label  
Free for every Registered Reader's table.  
For the rest of the gang who are not patriotic  
I've another appeal they'll discover hypnotic:  
Tell them it's smart to be dead and won't hurt  
And they'll gobble up drug as they gobble up dirt.

## SPANISH SCHOOL

The painters of Spain  
Dipped their brushes in pain  
By grief on a gallipot  
Was Spanish tint begot.

Just see how Theotocopoulos  
Throws on his canvas  
Colours of hell  
Christ lifts his head to cry  
Once more I bleed and die  
Mary emaciated cries:  
Are men not satiated?



Must the blood of my son  
For ever run?  
The sky turns to burning oil  
Blood red and yellow boil  
Down from on high  
Will no *hills* fall on us  
To hide that sky?  
Y Luciente's pen  
Traces the life of men  
Christs crucified upon a slope  
They have no hope  
Like Calderon who wrote in grief and scorn:  
The greatest crime of man's to have been born.  
Dr Péral  
In a coat of gray  
Has a way  
With his mouth which seems to say  
A lot  
But nothing very good to hear  
And as for Doña Ysabel Corbos de Porcel  
Well  
What a bitch  
This seems to me a portrait which  
Might have been left unhung  
Or at anyrate slung  
A little higher up.

But never mind there's always Ribera  
With his little lamb  
(Number two-four-four)  
To give a more  
Genial atmosphere  
'And a little jam  
For the pill –  
But still.

## NIGHT-TIME IN THE CEMETERY

The funeral paths are hung with snow  
About the graves the mourners go  
To think of those who lie below.  
The churchyard pales are black against the night  
And snow hung here seems doubly white.  
I have a horror of this place  
A horror of each moonlit mourner's face  
These people are not familiar  
But strange and stranger than strange peculiar  
They have that look of a cheese do you know sour-sweet  
You can smell their feet.  
Yet must I tread  
About my dead  
And guess the forms within the grave  
And hear the clank of jowl on jowl  
Where low lie kin no love could save.  
Yet stand I by my grave as they by theirs. Oh bitter Death  
That brought their love and mine unto a coffin's breadth.

## ALONE IN THE WOODS

Alone in the woods I felt  
The bitter hostility of the sky and the trees  
Nature has taught her creatures to hate  
Man that fusses and fumes  
Unquiet man  
As the sap rises in the trees  
As the sap paints the trees a violent green

So rises the wrath of Nature's creatures  
At man  
So paints the face of Nature a violent green.  
Nature is sick at man  
Sick at his fuss and fume  
Sick at his agonies  
Sick at his gaudy mind  
That drives his body  
Ever more quickly  
More and more  
In the wrong direction.

## GOD AND THE DEVIL

God and the Devil  
Were talking one day  
Ages and ages of years ago.  
God said Suppose  
Things were fashioned this way,  
Well then, so and so.  
The Devil said No,  
Prove it if you can.  
So God created Man  
And that is how it all began.  
It has continued now for many a year  
And sometimes it seems more than we can bear.  
But why should bowels yearn and cheeks grow pale?  
We're here to point a moral and adorn a tale.

## ES WAR EINMAL

I raised my gun  
I took the sight  
Against the sun  
I shot a kite.

I raised my gun  
I took the sight  
A second one  
I shot in flight.

I raised my gun  
I shot a plover  
I loaded up  
And shot another.

Now round about me  
Lay the dead  
One more, one more,  
Then home to bed.

Pray Heaven, said I  
Send the best  
That ever took  
Lead to its breast.

Upon the word  
Upon the right  
Rose up a phoenix  
Beaming bright.

I raised my gun  
I took the sight  
My lead unbarred  
That breast of white,

Alas for awful  
Magic art  
The bullet bounced  
Into my heart.

The phoenix bled  
My heart can not  
But heavy sits  
Neath leaden shot.

Leave shooting, friend,  
Or if you must  
Shoot only what  
Is mortal dust.

Pray not to Heaven  
He stock your bag  
Or you may feel  
Your vitals sag.

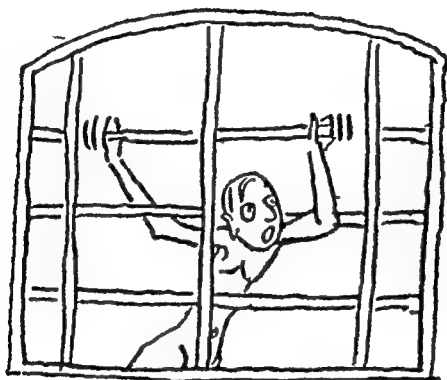
Pray not to Heaven  
For heavenly bird  
Or Heaven may take you  
At your word.

## NUMBERS

A thousand and fifty-one waves  
Two hundred and thirty-one seagulls  
A cliff of four hundred feet  
Three miles of ploughed fields  
One house  
Four windows look on the waves

Four windows look on the ploughed fields  
One skylight looks on the sky  
In that skylight's sky is one seagull.

## FROM THE COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUM



The people say that spiritism is a joke and a swizz,  
The Church that it is dangerous – not half it is.

## THE BEREAVED SWAN

Wan  
Swan  
On the lake  
Like a cake  
Of soap  
Why is the swan  
Wan  
On the lake?  
He has abandoned hope.

Wan  
Swan  
On the lake afloat  
Bows his head:  
O would that I were dead  
For her sake that lies  
Wrapped from my eyes  
In a mantle of death,  
The swan saith.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN  
MR HARRISON IN NEWCASTLE AND  
MR SHOLTO PEACH HARRISON  
IN HULL

Sholto Peach Harrison you are no son of mine  
And do you think I bred you up to cross the River Tyne  
And do you think I bred you up (and mother says the same)  
And do you think I bred you up to live a life of shame  
To live a life of shame my boy as you are thinking to  
Down south in Kingston-upon-Hull a traveller in glue?  
Come back my bonny boy nor break your father's heart  
Come back and marry Lady Susan Smart  
She has a mint in Anglo-Persian oil  
And Sholto never more need think of toil.

You are an old and evil man my father  
I tell you frankly Sholto had much rather  
Travel in glue unrecompensed unwed  
Than go to church with oily Sue and afterwards to bed.

## NATURE AND FREE ANIMALS

I will forgive you everything,  
But what you have done to my Dogs  
I will not forgive.  
You have taught them the sicknesses of your mind  
And the sicknesses of your body  
You have taught them to be servile  
To hang servilely upon your countenance  
To be dependent touching and entertaining  
To have rights to be wronged  
And wrongs to be righted.  
You have taught them to be protected by a Society.  
This I will not forgive,  
Saith the Lord.  
Well, God, it's all very well to talk like this  
And I dare say it's all very fine  
And Nature and Free Animals  
Are all very fine,  
Well all I can say is  
If you wanted it like that  
You shouldn't have created me  
Not that I like it very much  
And now that I'm on the subject I'll say,  
What with Nature and Free Animals on the one side  
And you on the other,  
I hardly know I'm alive.

ENG.

What has happened to the young men of Eng.?  
Why are they so lovey-dovey so sad and so domesticated  
So sad and so philoprogenitive



So sad and without sensuality?  
They love with a *ci-devant* feminine affection  
They see in their dreams a little home  
And *kiddies*  
Ah the *kiddies*  
They would not mind *having* babies:  
It is unkind  
Of Nature to lag behind.

## DEATH BEREAVES OUR COMMON MOTHER NATURE GRIEVES FOR MY DEAD BROTHER

Lamb dead, dead lamb,  
He was, I am,  
Separation by a tense  
Baulks my eyes' indifference.  
Can I see the lately dead  
And not bend a sympathetic head?  
Can I see lamb dead as mutton  
And not care a solitary button?

## BAG-SNATCHING IN DUBLIN

Sisley  
Walked so nicely  
With footsteps so discreet  
To see her pass  
You'd never guess  
She walked upon the street.

Down where the Liffy waters' turgid flood  
Churns up to greet the ocean-driven mud,  
A bruiser in a fix  
Murdered her for 6/6.

## THE RIVER DEBEN

All the waters of the river Deben  
Go over my head to the last wave even  
Such a death were sweet to seven times seven.

Death sits in the boat with me  
His face is shrouded but he smiles I see  
The time is not yet, he will not come so readily.

But he smiles and I smile it is pleasant in the boat at night  
There is no moon rising but from the east a light  
Shines in the sky, is it dawn or dawn's twilight?

Over here the waters are dark as a deep chasm  
Shadowed by cliffs of volcanic spasm  
So dark so dark is the waves' fashion.

But the oars dip I am rowing they dip and scatter  
The phosphorescence in a sudden spatter  
Of light that is more actual than a piece of matter.

Up the Deben we row I row towards Waldringfield  
It is a long way yet, my arms ache but will not yield  
In this physical tiredness there is a happy shield.

Oh happy Deben, oh happy night, and night's companion Death,  
What exultation what ecstasy is in thy breath  
It is as salt as the salt silt that lies beneath.

Flow tidal river flow, draw wind from the east,  
Smile pleasant Death, smile Death in darkness blessed,  
But tarry day upon the crack of dawn. Thou comest unwished.

## DEATH CAME TO ME

Death came to me and said  
'Which will you choose?  
'Use one  
'Or all of these to summon me.  
'I'll come.'  
And with a smile he'd gone.  
There lay a knife  
A labelled flask a gun.

I took the knife  
Its cruel edge would bite  
Into my flesh  
Had I the resolution or the art  
To bear the smart  
And drive it to my heart?  
Not I, I say  
I love my flesh too much  
For such  
A way.

I took the flask and turned the label up –  
Eastern Syrop – what a stirrup cup  
For my short ride into eternity  
And what a shame  
To give a lordly drug so base a name  
That better than this bottleful  
Had decked a novelette by Mrs Hull.

For underneath the superscription lurked I knew  
With pulses quickening and the blood thickening  
For fear in every vein the deadly strychnine  
It paralysed the heart at once they said, but I  
Had not the heart to try.

I took the revolver in my hand and broke it open.  
A Webley, service pattern, is a useful weapon  
I liked it for the magazine chock-full  
Of ammunition, liked the dull  
Shimmer of its barrel in the firelight's glimmer.  
It had an air of quiet distinction lying there.  
The handmaid of extinction  
Had killed a better man than I had ever been  
In nineteen hundred and fourteen.\*  
I snapped it to,  
It weighed about a ton,  
And two  
Were on the trigger  
Phew  
I put it to my head  
And now I'm dead.

## NO RESPECT

I have no respect for you  
For you would not tell the truth about your grief  
But laughed at it  
When the first pang was past  
And made it a thing of nothing.  
You said

\* This and the preceding line were marked for deletion in the author's own copy.

That what had been  
Had never been  
That what was  
Was not:  
You have a light mind  
And a coward's soul.

## THE REASON

My life is vile  
I hate it so  
I'll wait awhile  
And then I'll go.

Why wait at all?  
Hope springs alive,  
Good may befall  
I yet may thrive.

It is because I can't make up my mind  
If God is good, impotent or unkind.

## I LIKE TO PLAY WITH HIM

I like to play with him  
He would be lovely to play with  
He is so solemn sensitive conceited  
He would be lovely to play with  
I could pretend  
Say so-and-so and so-and-so  
Watch his responses

How'd he take that today  
And this tomorrow,  
Mood, tense, you see  
I'd conjugate His Inexcellency.

Oh on that evening you were  
So charming enchanting touching  
Lost wounded and betrayed  
Oh that should have been only the beginning.

## ANALYSAND

He chases his tail  
Like a puppy-fool  
And wonders it tastes stale  
The puppy-fool.

All thoughts that are turned inward to their source  
Bring one to self-hatred and remorse  
The punishment is suicide of course.

But first he'll tread  
A calvary  
From bed to bed  
Of misery

And lying thinking on his bed of stone  
No sleep will come to him he is alone  
For evermore with every aching bone.

His spirit flags  
His body slumps  
His spirit nags  
His mental dumps.

Self dedicated to self scrutiny  
His every moment's an eternity  
Of irritation and monotony.

For fuss and fret  
His tears fall down  
His brow is set  
In savage frown.

But is it surprising Reader do you think?  
Would you expect to find him in the pink  
Who's solely occupied with his own mental stink?

## SUNT LEONES

The lions who ate the Christians on the sands of the arena  
By indulging native appetites played what has now been seen a  
Not entirely negligible part  
In consolidating at the very start  
The position of the Early Christian Church.  
Initiatory rites are always bloody  
And the lions, it appears  
From contemporary art, made a study  
Of dyeing Coliseum sands a ruddy  
Liturgically sacrificial hue  
And if the Christians felt a little blue—  
Well people being eaten often do.  
Theirs was the death, and theirs the crown undying,  
A state of things which must be satisfying.  
My point which up to this has been obscured  
Is that it was the lions who procured

By chewing up blood gristle flesh and bone  
The martyrdoms on which the Church has grown.  
I only write this poem because I thought it rather looked  
As if the part the lions played was being overlooked.  
By lions' jaws great benefits and blessings were begotten  
And so our debt to Lionhood must never be forgotten.

## LORD MOPE

What shall we say of this curious young man?  
Scion of aristocracy sycophant of eld  
Sitting at the feet of the old men because they are old  
Warming his shivering behind at their gutted flame . . .  
Brace up oh bunny heart, that man's no sage  
Though the years heap on his head, be not deceived.  
Each year is but a weight  
To sky his empty pate  
Nearer to heaven's gate  
Nearer his god to him  
(His god of prejudice and whim).  
Oh fearful young man shivering ridiculously  
What shall I say to give you heart oh poor young man?  
No shield is in the old  
Better to be young and cold  
(Shivering ridiculously in your four-and-twenty years)  
Better to be young, a Cry-baby, a Pet,  
Than to be an old man, mouthing in a fret.  
Better to be young and let the cold tears fall and ravage  
Than to be an Old Boy, senile, simian and savage.



## NEVER AGAIN

Never again will I weep  
And wring my hands  
And beat my head against the wall  
Because  
Me nolentem fata trahunt  
But  
When I have had enough  
I will arise  
And go unto my Father  
And I will say to Him:  
Father, I have had enough.

## LITTLE BOY LOST

The wood was rather old and dark  
The witch was very ugly  
And if it hadn't been for father  
Walking there so smugly  
I never should have followed  
The beckoning of her finger.  
Ah me how long ago it was  
And still I linger  
Under the ever interlacing beeches  
Over a carpet of moss  
I lift my hand but it never reaches  
To where the breezes toss  
The sun-kissed leaves above.  
The sun?  
Beware.  
The sun never comes here.  
Round about and round I go  
Up and down and to and fro

The woodlouse hops upon the tree  
Or should do but I really cannot see,  
Happy fellow. Why can't I be  
Happy as he?  
The wood grows darker every day  
It's not a bad place in a way  
But I lost the way  
Last Tuesday  
Did I love father, mother, home?  
Not very much; but now they're gone  
I think of them with kindly toleration  
Bred inevitably of separation.  
Really if I could find some food  
I should be happy enough in this wood  
But darker days and hungrier I must spend  
Till hunger and darkness make an end.

## ANGEL OF GRACE

I was talking one day  
To a lady gay  
When my Guardian Angel  
Plucked me away:  
Where can she be  
Oh where does she wander  
That lady of whom  
I grow fonder and fonder?

## FREDDY

Nobody knows what I feel about Freddy  
I cannot make anyone understand  
I love him sub specie aeternitatis  
I love him out of hand.  
I don't love him so much in the restaurants that's a fact  
To get him hobnob with my old pub chums needs too much tact  
He don't love them and they don't love him  
In the pub lub lights they say Freddy very dim.  
But get him alone on the open saltings  
Where the sea licks up to the fen  
He is his and my own heart's best  
World without end ahem.  
People who say we ought to get married ought to get smacked:  
Why should we do it when we can't afford it and have ourselves  
whacked?  
Thank you kind friends and relations thank *you*,  
We do very well as we do.  
Oh what do I care for the pub lub lights  
And the friends I love so well –  
There's more in the way I feel about Freddy  
Than a friend can tell.  
But all the same I don't care much for his meelyoo I mean  
I don't anheimate mich in the ha-ha well-off suburban scene  
Where men are few and hearts go tumptytum  
In the tennis club lub lights poet very dumb.  
But there never was a boy like Freddy  
For a haystack's ivory tower of bliss  
Where speaking sub specie humanitatis  
Freddy and me can kiss.  
Exiled from his meelyoo  
Exiled from mine  
There's all Tom Tiddler's time pocket  
For his love and mine.

## IS IT WISE?

Is it wise  
To hug misery  
To make a song of Melancholy  
To weave a garland of sighs  
To abandon hope wholly?  
No, it is not wise.

Is it wise  
To love Mortality  
To make a song of Corruptibility  
A chain of linked lies  
To bind Mutability?  
No, it is not wise.

Is it wise  
To endure  
To call up Old Fury  
And Pain for a martyr's dowry  
When Death's a prize  
Easy to carry?  
No, it is not wise.

## THIS ENGLISHWOMAN

This Englishwoman is so refined  
She has no bosom and no behind.



## LORD BARRENSTOCK

Lord Barrenstock and Epicene,  
What's it to me that you have been  
In your pursuit of interdicted joys  
Seducer of a hundred little boys?

Your sins are red about your head  
And many people wish you dead.

You trod the widow in the mire  
Wronged the son, deceived the sire.

You put a fence about the land  
And made the people's cattle graze on sand.

Ratted from many a pool and forced amalgamation  
And dealt in shares which never had a stock exchange quotation.

Non flocci facio, I do not care  
For wrongs you made the other fellow bear:  
'Tis not for these unsocial acts not these  
I wet my pen. I would not have you tease,  
With a repentance smug and overdue  
For all the things you still desire to do,  
The ears of an outraged divinity:  
But oh your tie is crooked and I see  
Too plain you had an éclair for your tea.

It is this nonchalance about your person –  
That is the root of my profound aversion.

You are too fat. In spite of stays  
Your shape is painful to the polished gaze;  
Your uncombed hair grows thin and daily thinner,  
In fact you're far too ugly to be such a sinner.

Lord Barrenstock and Epicene, consider all that you have done  
Lord Epicene and Barrenstock, yet not two Lords but one,  
I think you are an object not of fear but pity  
Be good, my Lord, since you can not be pretty.

## MAXIMILIAN ESTERHAZY

O Maximilian stern and wild  
Wilt thou not look on me thy little child  
Thy once so darling dear, so closely presst,  
So cared for, so extravagantly dresst,  
Raised up from nothing in thy thought to be  
A furnished dwelling of felicity?  
Now thou dost frown and all my walls descend  
Like Jericho's and there is a swift end  
Of comely donjon and of crested tops  
Of flying buttresses and decorated props.  
O never castle in the hills of Spain  
Was half so much of nothing as thy Jane,  
When thou dost turn away and no more look,  
She is a song unsung, an unwrit book.

## MAJOR MACROO

Major Hawkaby Cole Macroo  
Chose

Very wisely

A patient Griselda of a wife with a heart of gold  
That never beat for a soul but him  
Himself and his slightest whim.

He left her alone for months at a time

When he had to have a change

Just had to

And his pension wouldn't stretch to a fare for two  
And he didn't want it to.

And if she wept she was game and nobody knew it  
And she stood at the edge of the tunnel and waved as his train  
    went through it.

And because it was cheaper they lived abroad  
And did he care if she might be unhappy or bored?  
He did not.  
He'd other things to think of – a lot.

He'd fads and he fed them fat,  
And she could lump it and that was that.

He'd several boy friends  
And she thought it was nice for him to have them,  
And she loved him and felt that he needed her and waited  
And waited and never became exasperated.

Even his room  
Was dusted and kept the same,  
And when friends came  
They went into every room in the house but that one  
Which Hawkaby wouldn't have shown.

Such men as these, such selfish cruel men  
Hurting what most they love what most loves them,  
Never make a mistake when it comes to choosing a woman  
To cherish them and be neglected and not think it inhuman.

## PRIVATE MEANS IS DEAD (Originally entitled Chaps)

Private Means is dead  
God rest his soul, officers and fellow-rankers said.  
Captive Good, attending Captain Ill  
Can tell us quite a lot about the Captain, if he will.



Major Portion  
Is a disingenuous person  
And as for Major Operation well I guess  
We all know what his reputation is.

The crux and Colonel  
Of the whole matter  
(As you may read in the Journal  
If it's not tattered)

Lies in the Generals Collapse Debility Panic and Uproar  
Who are too old in any case to go to the War.

## BEREAVEMENT

Maria Holt  
Was not the dolt  
That people thought her.  
Her face was full  
Her mind not dull  
She was my daughter.  
She had so much to do so very much  
And used to shuffle round upon a crutch,  
The younger children always called her mother,  
And so she was to sister and to brother  
Poor wretch she's dead and now I am bereft  
Of £60 each year to fill the place she left  
I never paid a cent before; it is too bad,  
It's worse to lose a lass than lose a lad.

## DEATH OF MR MOUNSEL

I am dying Egypt dying  
Keep my watch and send word home  
Never mind about the funeral  
Just a simple coping stone  
Manly virtue needs no bushel  
Baby hands that cling and tear  
Better twenty years of Kathy  
Than the fiend's own heart of fear  
Solitude corrupting manners  
Often has the tale been told  
Memory paints a brighter pansy  
Springing from the funeral mould  
Let my grave with wrath no stranger  
Visit nor complaining come  
Unmolested quit of danger  
Quietly I slip hence and home  
But when lights are glowing lower  
Pressing downward through the gloom  
And the porter shows the lady  
To the first-class waiting-room  
Then let every City Pretty –  
You not least dear you not least –  
Shed a tear for Mister Mounsel  
Most unhappily deceased.

## WHO KILLED LAWLESS LEAN?

The parrot  
Is eating a carrot  
In his cage in the garret

Why is the parrot's  
Cage in the garret?  
He is not a sage  
Parrot: his words enrage.

Downstairs  
In his bed  
Lies the head  
Of the family  
He is dead.

And the brothers gather  
Mutter utter would rather  
Forget  
The words the parrot  
Said.

When high in his cage swinging  
From the lofty ceiling  
'Sat the pet screaming:  
'Who killed Lawless Lean?'  
It was not at all fitting.

So they put the parrot  
In his cage in the garret  
And gave him a carrot  
To keep him quiet  
He should be glad they did not wring his neck.

## ROAD UP

It seemed a curious place to rest one's body and take one's ease  
Here in the very middle of Euston Road.  
Now if it had been on the 'Thames' green bank, under poplar trees,  
But here the traffic instead of the water flowed.

It was a British working man who lay full length on his back  
And every now and then he turned and hit the road a thwack.  
Was he dowsing tapping for water I wonder,  
Or was it a sudden spasm of rage that split his dreams asunder?

## MRS OSMOSIS

Mrs Osmosis  
Is all right in small doses  
Like what I was saying about Mrs Pale  
There's a tell-tale  
And for why?  
Cos I blacked her eye  
Last Fri—  
day.  
It don't sound natural to me  
But they do say Mr P.  
Well it all comes of her going with a fellow which ain't hardly so  
to say  
Not that *he'd* cause to worry, seeing it was that way.

## THE FUGITIVE'S RIDE

Across the bridge across the dyke  
Foresworn by friend and foe alike,  
I ride  
The field upon the further side  
Stretches before me and its wide

;

Horizon dark against dark sky  
Beckons me on. Dim homesteads lie  
To left and right as I ride by.

It is a wet and steamy night,  
More steamy night I have not seen,  
More steamy night there has not been,  
I have rode on for many a mile  
And now it does not rain  
And has not done for quite a while  
And all the plain  
Lies limpid underneath the stars  
That give an eerie light  
And make the plain seem to be bright.  
With standing water, deep or shallow?  
Deep lake, or river? Corn or fallow?  
Lord, Lord, I cannot say  
But warily I pick my way  
This false starlight is worse than no light  
To bewitch  
The eyes and hide the gaping ditch.

What owl was that that howls upon  
The trees athwart the stream  
And have I been this way before  
Or do I dream?  
He seems to be a mournful one  
That hoots to make a coward run  
I hate to hear I hate to see  
An owl that hoots so dismally  
It makes my very blood run cold  
No bird should dare to be so bold  
I feel as fearful as he should  
Who's done a dreadful deed of blood.

(Now hold up horse a moment pray,  
Don't sidestep in that foolish way,  
If you fall down upon the ground  
There is a chance you will be drowned.)

A wetter plain I have not seen  
A wetter plain there has not been  
I say there has not been  
A wetter plain  
Since first I came  
And may I die  
If once again it does not rain.  
In early dawn is this dark plain  
Made darker still of darkness shorn  
More dismaller but still the same  
Lit by the ray that heralds day.

On my poor horse so lost so wan  
That cannot understand  
Why we must ride and ride and ride  
And never yet come home  
On you must go until you drop  
For since time won't, I dare not stop.

## SUBURB

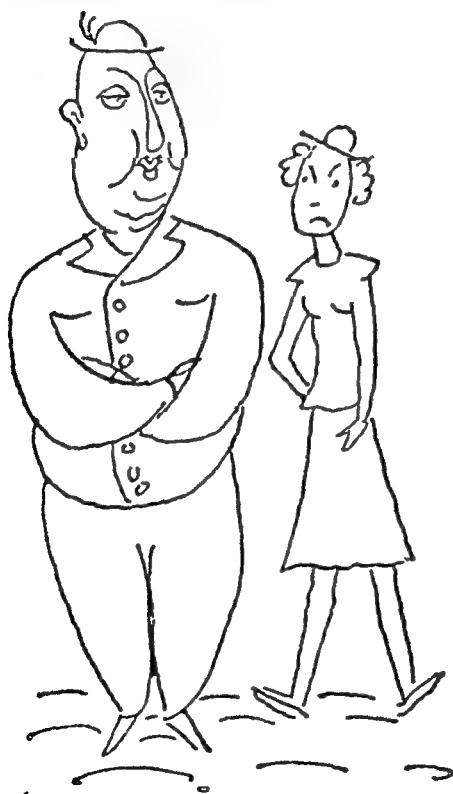
How nice it is to slink the streets at night  
And taste the slight  
Flavour of acridy that comes  
From pavements throwing off the dross  
Of human tread.  
Each paving stone sardonic  
Grins to its fellow citizen masonic:

'Thank God they're gone,' each to the other cries  
'Now there is nothing between us and the skies'.  
Joy at this state transports the hanging heavens  
And down to earth they rain celestial dew  
The pavement darkly gleams beneath the lamp  
Forgetful now of daylight's weary tramp.  
Round about the streets I slink  
Suburbs are not so bad I think  
When their inhabitants can not be seen,  
Even Palmers Green.  
Nobody loves the hissing rain as I  
And round about I slink  
And presently  
Turn from the sleek wet pavements to the utter slime  
Where jerrybuilders building against time  
Pursue their storied way,  
Foundations and a pram,  
Four walls and a pot of jam,  
They have their sentries now  
Upon a hundred hillocks.  
Night watchman bad and old  
Take rheumatism in exchange for gold.  
Do you see that pub between the trees  
Which advertises gin and cyclists' teas?  
Down there I know a lane  
Under the padding rain  
Where leaves are born again  
Every night  
And reach maturity  
In a remote futurity  
Before dawn's light.  
I have never seen  
Anything quite so green  
So close so dark so bright  
As the green leaves at night.

I will not show you yet  
Lest you should forget,  
But when the time is come for your dismembering  
I'll show you that you may die remembering.

## BEWARE THE MAN

Beware the man whose mouth is small  
For he'll give nothing and take all.





## BREUGHEL

The ages blaspheme  
The people are weak  
As in a dream  
They evilly speak.

Their words in a clatter  
Of meaningless sound  
Without form or matter  
Echo around.

The people oh Lord  
Are sinful and sad  
Prenatally biased  
Grow worsen born bad

They sicken oh Lord  
They have no strength in them  
Oh rouse up my God  
And against their will win them.

Must thy lambs to the slaughter  
Delivered be  
With each son and daughter  
Irrevocably?

From tower and steeple  
Ring out funeral bells  
Oh Lord save thy people  
They have no help else.

## TENDER ONLY TO ONE

Tender only to one  
Tender and true  
The petals swing  
To my fingering  
Is it you, or you, or you?

Tender only to one  
I do not know his name  
And the friends who fall  
To the petals' call  
May think my love to blame.

Tender only to one  
This petal holds a clue  
The face it shows  
But too well knows  
Who I am tender to.

Tender only to one,  
Last petal's latest breath  
Cries out aloud  
From the icy shroud  
His name, his name is Death.

## O HAPPY DOGS OF ENGLAND

O happy dogs of England  
Bark well as well you may  
If you lived anywhere else  
You would not be so gay.

O happy dogs of England  
Bark well at errand boys  
If you lived anywhere else  
You would not be allowed to make such an infernal noise.

## DARLING DAUGHTERS

Darling daughters, listen to your mother,  
I must go away and leave you to each other,  
And one shall marry a rich man  
And one shall go on an excursion to the Isle of Man  
And one shall find her way home if she can.

## THE BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

I admire the Bishops of the Church of England  
No man can be a Bishop of the Church of England  
And a fool.  
A man can be a Bishop of the Church of England  
And a knave.  
But  
Fortunately  
Few if any of the Bishops of the Church of England  
Are men of ill will.  
They do their best  
To resolve wisely  
To govern effectively.  
They are the butt of the ignoramus,  
Of the sentimentalist,  
Of the man who makes

Of his own bad temper and incompetency  
A Movement for the Amelioration of the Sufferings  
Of the Oppressed Members of the Lower Middle Classes.

## EULENSPIEGELEI

To be so cold and yet not old  
Oh what can ail the changeling child?  
She has an eye that is too bold  
Upon the night. She is beguiled.

The night is dark and the windowpane  
Holds the rattle of the falling rain.  
Oh look not forth but look within  
Where the room lies safe from the stormwinds' din.

The tears upon the infant eyes  
Are held in icy thrall  
And when she speaks contrariwise  
The riven echoes fall:

Oh mother come not near me now  
Nor lay thy hand on my cold cold brow  
Few years if any heap on my head  
But I am old as the newly dead.

Now louder far than the stormwinds' jar  
And the voice of mother and child  
Is heard the scritch of the gravid bitch  
That will be so wild.

Oh what can ail the gravid bitch  
That howls upon the midnight stroke?  
Dear mother dear I cannot say  
Perhaps the devil gave her a poke.

The changeling child from her bed is gone  
The mother weeps alone  
And the stormwinds beat on the window pane  
To mock the maternal moan.

Oh whither is fled thy changeling child  
And by what witching craft?  
It was the Eulenspiegel spake  
And as he spake he lughed.

For well he knew that wrought it so,  
The bitch and the changeling too  
Are vanished away from the stormwinds' ply  
And the stricken mother's mew.

## THE ABOMINABLE LAKE

Deep in the still mysterious waters of the lake a world lies  
drowned.

How sombre and sad the silent world in the womb of the lake,  
Not the reflection of Tellus, not the arch of heaven  
Lies in the waters of the abominable lake,  
But an earth and a heaven beyond the dominion of Time,  
Beyond the soft sensual touch of the seasonal flow  
And the inviolable sequence of midnight and noon.  
Poor world, my heart breaks for your sealed inarticulate woe,  
And the tears that are frozen in yours melt to flood in my eyes,  
Overflow and descend and impinge on the waters of the lake  
And shatter at once the form of the silent world  
But the teardrops mingle, the waters shudder and close,  
And again and again the sad world is revealed to my sight.

When I know, and the knowledge transfixes my sensitive heart,  
Not my tears, nor my prayers, nor my gold shall encompass at last  
Freedom unthought, manumission unhopèd, undesired.

## ONE OF MANY

You are only one of many  
And of small account if any,  
You think about yourself too much.  
This touched the child with a quick touch  
And worked his mind to such a pitch  
He threw his fellows in a ditch.  
This little child  
That was so mild  
Is grown too wild.

Murder in the first degree, cried Old Fury,  
Recording the verdict of the jury.

Now they are come to the execution tree.  
The gallows stand wide. Ah me, ah me.

Christ died for sinners, intoned the Prison Chaplain from his  
miscellany.

Weeping bitterly the little child cries: I die one of many.

## DEATH'S OSTRACISM

He trod in dream upon the brim  
Of a deep sea, his mirth too young for him,  
For all the people that he smiled upon  
Cry: Fool. And they are gone.

With what hostility  
And pride  
They saw and fled.  
He sighed.

The sea ran heavy on a core  
Of ludden deep disturbance, ah before  
The dream came had an earthquake first  
The seabed burst.

Now from the depths  
He sees  
The sullied water rise,  
All is disease.

And the long reaching waves swing wide,  
Sick with death's taste upon the flooding tide,  
And dead sea monsters with a deep appal  
Of open wounds upon the water sprawl.

His foothold slips.  
The clay  
Rank with long rains  
Gives way.

But falling he will call the waves to friend,  
Come cover over all and make an end.  
No use, they will not do it, they swing aside.  
Death's ostracism in a dream he must abide.

## THE BOAT

The boat that took my love away  
He sent again to me  
To tell me that he should not sleep  
Alone beneath the sea.

The flower and fruit of love are mine  
The ant, the fieldmouse and the mole,  
But now a tiger prowls without  
And claws upon my soul.

Love is not love that wounded bleeds  
And bleeding sullies slow.  
Come death within my hands and I  
Unto my love will go.

## PARROT

The old sick green parrot  
High in a dingy cage  
Sick with malevolent rage  
Beadily glugged his furious eye  
On the old dark  
Chimneys of Noel Park

Far from his jungle green  
Over the seas he came  
To the yellow skies, to the dripping rain,  
To the night of his despair.  
And the pavements of his street  
Are shining beneath the lamp  
With a beauty that's not for one  
Born under a tropic sun.



He has croup. His feathered chest  
Knows no minute of rest.  
High on his perch he sits  
And coughs and spits,  
Waiting for death to come.  
Pray heaven it wont be long.

## THE DOCTOR

You are not looking at all well, my dear,  
In fact you are looking most awfully queer.  
Do you find that the pain is more than you can bear?

Yes, I find that it is more than I can bear, so give me some bromide  
And then I will go away for a long time and hide  
Somewhere on the seashore where the tide

Coming upon me when I am asleep shall cover  
Me, go over entirely,  
Carry beyond recovery.

## I HATE THIS GIRL

I hate this girl  
She is so cold.  
And yet her eyes say  
She is not so good as gold.  
I should like to kill her,  
But what do I do?  
Kiss her, kiss her,  
And wish that she would kiss me too.

## INFELICE

Walking swiftly with a dreadful duchess,  
He smiled too briefly, his face was as pale as sand,  
He jumped into a taxi when he saw me coming,  
Leaving me alone with a private meaning,  
He loves me so much, my heart is singing.  
Later at the Club when I rang him in the evening  
They said: Sir Rat is dining, is dining, is dining,  
No Madam, he left no message, ah how his silence speaks,  
He loves me too much for words, my heart is singing.  
The Pullman seats are here, the tickets for Paris, I am waiting,  
Presently the telephone rings, it is his valet speaking,  
Sir Rat is called away, to Scotland, his constituents,  
(Ah the dreadful duchess, but he loves me best)  
Best pleasure to the last, my heart is singing  
One night he came, it was four in the morning,  
Walking slowly upstairs, he stands beside my bed,  
Dear darling, lie beside me, it is too cold to stand speaking,  
He lies down beside me, his face is like the sand,  
He is in a sleep of love, my heart is singing.  
Sleeping softly softly, in the morning I must wake him,  
And waking he murmurs, I only came to sleep.  
The words are so sweetly cruel, how deeply he loves me,  
I say them to myself alone, my heart is singing.  
Now the sunshine strengthens, it is ten in the morning,  
He is so timid in love, he only needs to know,  
He is my little child, how can he come if I do not call him,  
I will write and tell him everything, I take the pen and write:  
I love you so much, my heart is singing.

## COME, DEATH (1)

Why dost thou dally, Death, and tarry on the way?  
When I have summoned thee with prayers and tears, why dost  
thou stay?  
Come, Death, and carry now my soul away.

Wilt thou not come for calling, must I show  
Force to constrain thy quick attention to my woe?  
I have a hand upon thy Coat, and will  
Not let thee go.

How foolish are the words of the old monks,  
In Life remember Death.  
Who would forget  
Thou closer hangst on every finished breath?  
How vain the work of Christianity  
To teach humanity  
Courage in its mortality.  
Who would not rather die  
And quiet lie  
Beneath the sod  
With or without a god?

Foolish illusion, what has Life to give?  
Why should man more fear Death than fear to live?

## SILENCE AND TEARS

*A priestly garment, eminently suitable for conducting funeral services in inclement weather.*

From a church outfitter's catalogue

The tears of the widow of the military man  
Fell down to the earth as the funeral sentence ran.  
Dust to dust, Oh how frightful sighed the mourners as the rain  
began.

But the grave yawned wide and took the tears and the rain,  
And the poor dead man was at last free from all his pain,  
Pee-wee sang the little bird upon the tree again and again.

Is it not a solemn moment when the last word is said,  
And wrapped in cloak of priestly custom we dispose our dead,  
And the earth falls heavy, heavy, upon the expensive coffin lined  
with lead?

And may the coffin hold his bones in peace that lies below,  
And may the widow woman's tears make a good show,  
And may the suitable priestly garment not let the breath of scandal  
through.

For the weather of their happening has been a little inclement,  
And would people be so sympathetic if they knew how the story  
went?  
Best not put it to the test. Silence and tears are convenient.

## A FATHER FOR A FOOL

*To the tune 'Boys and Girls Come out to Play'.*

Little Master Home-from-School,  
This is the Parkland you must rule,  
What does it feel like to have a father for a fool?  
Your father mortgaged the estate,  
Lost his money, blamed fate  
And shot himself through the head too late,  
There's a father for a fool,  
My little Master Home-from-School.

Why does Auntie wear such funny hats  
And invert her sentences? Now that's  
Positive proof she must be bats.  
Why has Parker got all the horses out for me?  
Why doesn't Ma meet the train as usually?  
Here's hoping they give us shrimps for tea.

Little Master Home-from-School,  
Your Ma lies dead, she lies too cool,  
She's stone cold dead of a broken heart, the fool.  
Jingle-jog the horses go,  
And Parker's thinking what I know:  
Here comes Master Home-from-School  
That had a father for a fool.

## BRICKENDEN, HERTFORDSHIRE

Sitting alone of a summer's evening,  
I thought  
Of the tragedy of unwatered country.

O little village of Brickenden,  
Where is thy stream,  
Translucent drain of thy manorial sward?  
Thy sward is green,  
Its source of verdancy guessed but unseen.  
Where is thy stream?  
I have beat every bound of this wild wood.  
I have trod down its spiteful and detaining undergrowth,  
Seeking a broad stream and contented fish,  
Seeking but finding not.  
Now that the sun  
Sou'westering in the sky  
Tells me that evening is come,  
I rest  
Oppressed  
By the wood's profligate viridity,  
By thy wood's sap,  
Child of a moisture that I cannot tap.

O woods of Brickenden, you have confounded me  
By your appearance of humidity.  
I see the pashy ground,  
And round and round  
My tired feet the rushes twine,  
And frogs croak and the sweating slime  
Is moved about by an ambiguous brood  
Of low and legless life.  
Hadst thou thy stream,  
O wood of Brickenden,  
This had been  
Paradise.

But thy sap's virtue comes from dank earth's sweat,  
And to be wet  
Is not enough, O wood.

Hadst thou thy stream,  
O little village of Brickenden,  
Thy stream  
Had salined thee  
By virtue of destinator sea,  
And thou hadst been  
A Paradise.  
But lacking stream  
Art but a suppuration of earth's humours.  
Sitting alone on a summer's evening,  
I wept  
For the tragedy of unwatered country.  
Take thou my tears, O Brickenden,  
They are thy rank sweat's sea.

## THE MURDERER

My true love breathed her latest breath  
And I have closed her eyes in death.  
It was a cold and windy day  
In March, when my love went away.  
She was not like other girls – rather diffident,  
And that is how we had an accident.

## MOTHER, AMONG THE DUSTBINS

Mother, among the dustbins and the manure  
I feel the measure of my humanity, an allure  
As of the presence of God. I am sure

In the dustbins, in the manure, in the cat at play,  
Is the presence of God, in a sure way  
He moves there. Mother, what do you say?

I too have felt the presence of God in the broom  
I hold, in the cobwebs in the room,  
But most of all in the silence of the tomb.

Ah! but that thought that informs the hope of our kind  
Is but an empty thing, what lies behind?—  
Naught but the vanity of a protesting mind

That would not die This is the thought that bounces  
Within a conceited head and trounces  
Inquiry. Man is most frivolous when he pronounces.

Well Mother, I shall continue to feel as I do,  
And I think you would be wise to do so too,  
Can you question the folly of man in the creation of God?  
Who are you?

## LE DÉSERT DE L'AMOUR

I want to be your pinkie  
I am tender to you  
My heart opens like a cactus flower  
Do you thinky I will do?

My heart is like a cactus  
Not like a cactus flower  
And I can kill love  
Without entering her bower.



So they both thought. But he was silent and she said:  
I cannot see which way you are pointing, the sky is so dark red,  
And when the sandstorm is over I shall lie down on my bed.

## TO A DEAD VOLE

Now Vole art dead  
And done is all thy bleeding.  
Thy soul is sped  
And all thy body's heeding  
For daily bread  
And comfortable bed  
Has brought thee where there's no more thought of feeding,  
And where the soil is thy last unappreciated quilt.

## REVERSIONARY

The Lion dishonoured bids death come,  
The worm in like hap lingers on.  
The Lion dead, his pride no less,  
The world inherits wormliness.

## DEAR KARL

Dear Karl, I send you Walt Whitman in a sixpenny book.  
'How dilettante,' I hear you observe, 'I hate these selections  
Arbitrarily made to meet a need that is not mine and a taste  
Utterly antagonistic, wholly alien, egregiously coercionary

Of individualism's, egotism's, insolence's light-fingered  
traffickings.'

Put a leash on your indignation; hold it on a tight short leash,  
Muzzle it in a tough criss-cross mesh of temporization and  
impartiality.

'God, I have no such dishonourable merchandise, such tinsel and  
tawdry in my shop window.'

So you say 'Then borrow or steal a muzzle to muzzle your  
indignation,

A criss-cross wire mesh of temporization and suavity, and with a  
muzzled and leashed wrath

Hanging on your tapping heels' Listen.

If I had what hypocritical poetasters crocodilely whining call  
lucre and filthy,

But man, and it takes a man to articulate the unpalatable truth,  
Means of support, if I had this and a little more,  
I would give you Leaves of Grass, I would send  
All of Walt Whitman to you with a smile that guesses it is  
More blest to give than receive.

For I, I myself, I have no Leaves of Grass  
But only Walt Whitman in a sixpenny book,  
Taste's, blend's, essence's, multum-in-parvo's Walt Whitman.  
And now sending it to you I say:

Fare out, Karl, on an afternoon's excursion, on a sixpenny  
unexplored uncharted road,

Over sixpennyworth of tarmac, blistered by an American sun,  
over irrupted boulders,

And a hundred freakish geology's superimpositions. Fare out on  
a strange road

Between lunchtime and dinner. Bon voyage, Karl, bon voyage.

## IN CANAAN'S HAPPY LAND

Fair waved the golden corn  
When I was stepping out,  
And all the churchyard bells they rang  
The day I turned about.

It's nice to get abroad,  
It quickens and refines,  
But now I find myself at home  
My heart to peace inclines.

The bells ring for my friends  
Who were untimely slain,  
But I was luckier than they  
And go my rounds again.

I take the cart I took,  
I take another horse,  
I sell my goods from door to door  
And smother every curse.

## PROUD DEATH WITH SWELLING PORT

Proud Death with swelling port comes ruffling by,  
He takes the worthy man and leaves the fond.  
So many worthy men and they must die,  
And all the foolish men stay still beyond  
The shadow of Death's beckoning O let *them* go  
And save man's nobler sons and daughters from Death's blow.

Thou wilt not do it, Lord, still wilt thou take  
First fruits of our integrity and strength,  
Tithes of our wisdom thou wilt have, and make  
Our loftiest sons sink to a coffin's length.

O spare them Lord, take toll of lesser men,  
For it is certain *they* will come again.

Men of great moral stature are not born  
So easily as men of lesser worth.  
But in the steep captivity forlorn  
Of Time's entrail they slowly draw to birth.  
After such long gestation, hast no ruth  
To eat them up in the first flower of youth?

O spare our nobler sons and daughters, give  
Them space to grow and feel their sinews' might  
And hearts' full beat O Father, let them live  
Throughout life's day, and in the cool of Night  
That is the cloak of natural death take them away.  
But while the sun is up still let them stay.

## MY SOUL

In the flame of the flickering fire  
The sins of my soul are few  
And the thoughts in my head are the thoughts of a bed  
With a solitary view.  
But the eye of eternal consciousness  
Must blink as a bat blinks bright  
Or ever the thoughts in my head be stilled  
On the brink of eternal night.

Oh feed to the golden fish his egg  
Where he floats in his captive bowl,  
To the cat his kind from the womb born blind,  
And to the Lord my soul.

## DEAR FEMALE HEART

Dear Female Heart, I am sorry for you,  
You must suffer, that is all that you can do.  
But if you like, in common with the rest of the human race,  
You may also look most absurd with a miserable face.



## HOW SLOWLY TIME LENGTHENS

How slowly time lengthens from a hated event.  
In my youth I was humiliated in a guilty association –  
Insinuator, flatterer, Board of Trade Surveyor, hypocrite,  
Aha, Hildreth Parker, how have the years dealt with you?

## THE RIVER HUMBER

No wonder  
The river Humber  
Lies in a silken slumber.

For it is dawn  
And over the newly warm  
Earth the mists turn,

Wrapping their gentle fringes  
Upon the river where it hanges  
Upon the perfect sleep of perfected images.

Quiet in the thought of its felicity,  
A graven monument of sufficiency  
Beautiful in every line the river sleeps complacently.

And hardly the dawn distinguishes  
Where a miasma languishes  
Upon the waters' farther reaches.

Lapped in the sleeping consciousness  
Of its waves' happiness  
Upon the mudbanks of its approaches,

The river Humber  
Turns again to deeper slumber,  
Deeper than deeps in joys without number.

## LA GRETCHEN DE NOS JOURS (1)

Would he might come  
Again and I  
Upon his breast  
Again might lie.

Would I had not  
In foolish wrath  
Driven him ever  
From my path.

Would that the sun,  
His day's course over,  
Might that same day's  
Lost dawn recover.

As vain as this  
Vain prayer are all  
Vain prayers that would  
Past days recall.

Never shall sun  
Now sunk away  
Rise up again  
On yesterday.

Never shall love  
Untimely slain  
Rise from the grave  
And live again.

## NOURISH ME ON AN EGG

Nourish me on an egg, Nanny,  
And ply with bottled stout,  
And I'll grow to be a man  
Before the secret's out.

Nourish me on an egg, Nanny,  
With bottled stout to drink,  
And I'll grow to be a man  
Before you can think.

Nourish me on an egg, Nanny,  
Don't wring your hands and weep,  
Bring me a glass of stout  
And close my eyes in sleep.

## SOUVENIR DE MONSIEUR POOP

I am the self-appointed guardian of English literature,  
I believe tremendously in the significance of age:  
I believe that a writer is wise at 50,  
Ten years wiser at 60, at 70 a sage.  
I believe that juniors are lively, to be encouraged with discretion  
and snubbed,  
I believe also that they are bouncing, communistic, ill mannered  
and, of course, young.  
But I never define what I mean by youth  
Because the word undefined is more useful for general purposes  
of abuse.  
I believe that literature is a school where only those who apply  
themselves diligently to their tasks acquire merit.



And only they after the passage of a good many years (see above).  
But then I am an old fogey.  
I always write more in sorrow than in anger.  
I am, after all, devoted to Shakespeare, Milton,  
And, coming to our own times,  
Of course  
Housman.  
I have never been known to say a word against the established  
classics,  
I am in fact devoted to the established classics.  
In the service of literature I believe absolutely in the principle of  
division;  
I divide into age groups and also into schools.  
This is in keeping with my scholastic mind, and enables me to  
trounce  
Not only youth  
(Which might be thought intellectually frivolous by pedants) but  
also periodical tendencies,  
To ventilate, in a word, my own political and moral philosophy.  
(When I say that I am an old fogey, I am, of course, joking.)  
English literature, as I see it, requires to be defended  
By a person of integrity and essential good humour  
Against the forces of fanaticism, idiosyncrasy and anarchy.  
I perfectly apprehend the perilous nature of my convictions  
And I am prepared to go to the stake  
For Shakespeare, Milton,  
And, coming to our own times,  
Of course  
Housman.  
I cannot say more than that, can I? . . .  
And I do not deem it advisable, in the interests of the editor to  
whom I am spatially contracted,  
To say less.

## UNSER VATER

(Originally entitled Vater Unser)  
*To the tune of the Londonderry Air.*

Unser Vater,  
Du Der im Himmel wohnst,  
Behold thy child,  
His prayers and his complaint.  
He was conceived  
In sin and born to set it on,  
This sin is his,  
His strength to act upon.  
Oh, Father, heed  
Thy child, let not the grave  
Seal him in sin  
Beyond thy power to save.  
Strike at his strength,  
Leave weakness only for her vaunt,  
Unser Vater,  
Du Der im Himmel wohnst.

## GNÄDIGES FRÄULEIN

In the cold light of morning she was looking rather queer,  
In the cold light of morning, with a ribbon round her hair,  
And her youth lay behind her a long time for many a year.

For when she was young, they took her love away  
And sent him to work, beyond the Mexique Bay,  
And she thought of him and lost her wits and now her hair is gray

With an, Oh, if I think of him he'll come again to me,  
And an, Oh, it was but a whim that took him o'er the sea;  
And an, Oh, for all my eyes are dim they can look lovingly.

## THE FRIEND

We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
And having seen it knowing lower flee it.  
But whither flee  
Exiled from bliss  
In these sad days  
Of nothingness,  
Shall we,  
Trailing the tired wing of happier flights,  
Hemmed in by lower presents mourn past heights,  
And in a phrase  
Of bitterness  
Throw  
All our woe?  
No, gentle soul,  
If fate and all the world have wronged thee,  
And every spectre of despite has thronged thee,  
Keep fast  
Thy visionary past,  
A part of present's whole  
And but a part.  
Thus happiness  
And grief in thy stout heart  
Shall range thee higher than th' angelic bands  
Who know bliss but no smart  
And serve  
With happy but not midnight clenched hands

A lower place deserve.  
But thou of present depth and former height  
Has highest height attained and needst no flight.

## THE LADS OF THE VILLAGE

The lads of the village, we read in the lay,  
By medalled commanders are muddled away,  
And the picture that the poet makes is not very gay.

Poet, let the red blood flow, it makes the pattern better,  
And let the tears flow, too, and grief stand that is their begetter,  
And let man have his self-forged chain and hug every fetter.

For without the juxtaposition of muddles, medals and clay,  
Would the picture be so very much more gay,  
Would it not be a frivolous dance upon a summer's day?

Oh sing no more: Away with the folly of commanders.  
This will not make a better song upon the field of Flanders,  
Or upon any field of experience where pain makes patterns the  
poet slanders.

## THE PHOTOGRAPH

They photographed me young upon a tiger skin  
And now I do not care at all for kith and kin,  
For oh the tiger nature works within.

Parents of England, not in smug  
Fashion fancy set on a rug  
Of animal fur the darling you would hug,

For lately born is not too young  
To scent the savage he sits upon,  
And tiger-possessed abandon all things human.

## ‘... AND THE CLOUDS RETURN AFTER THE RAIN’

*To the tune ‘Worthy the Lamb’.*

In a shower of tears I sped my fears  
And lost my heavy pain,  
But now my grief that knew relief  
Is sultried o’er again.

Of leaf and flower of that first shower  
No memories remain.  
‘The clouds hang down in heavy frown  
But still it does not rain.

Happy the man of simple span  
Whose cry waits on his pain,  
But there are some whose mouths are dumb  
When the clouds return again.

## OUT OF TIME

It is a formal and deserted garden  
With many a flower bed and winding path.  
A cupid stands and draws a bow at venture  
Upon a marble bath.

All round his feet the eager ivy grows,  
Stretches upon the stone, above the ground,  
And in the ivy flowers the busy bee  
Makes a melodious sound.

The air is languorous with summer scents  
And still it lies upon the garden all  
As still and secret as it stayed upon  
A funeral.

The sun shines brightly in the upper air  
And casts his beams upon the garden grass.  
There spilled they lie a carpet of dull gold  
Where shadows pass.

The garden gives to these primaeval beams  
That strew its floor a plastered yellow tone  
As of too mellow sunshine that brings on  
A thunder stone.

It is an ominous enchanted garden  
That can transmogrify the healthful rays,  
Can hold and make them an essential part  
Of unquiet days.

Ah me, the unquiet days they tread me down,  
The hours and minutes beat upon my head  
I have spent here the time of three men's lives  
And am not dead.

And even as I count the days that pass  
I lose the total and begin again.  
It is an evil garden out of Time  
A place of pain.

## THE CHILDREN OF THE CROSS

Oh cold and ferocious are the children of the cross,  
They have captured us and bound us and their gain is our loss.  
But straining to death  
In the stench of the fire's breath  
We leave lonely for ever the children of the cross.

## FALLEN, FALLEN

The angel that rebellion raised  
In moment of ecstatic rage  
Is fallen, is fallen; his power is gauged.

Noted, by rote is had, the word is spoken.  
Nothing remains but a falling star for a token,  
A tale told by the fireside, a sword that is broken.

## WILL EVER?

Will ever the stormy seas and the surges deep,  
Swinging from left to right over the world,  
Stay in their idiot pacing, silently sleep  
In a memorial silence of precreation?

Alas for the crafty hand and the cunning brain  
That took from silence and sleep the form of the world,  
That bound eternity in a measuring chain  
Of hours reduplicate and sequential days.

Would that the hours of time as a word unsaid  
Turning had turned again to the hourless night,  
Would that the seas lay heavy upon the dead,  
The lightless dead in the grave of a world new drowned.

## LITTLE BOY SICK

I am not God's little lamb  
I am God's sick tiger.  
And I prowl about at night  
And what most I love I bite,  
And upon the jungle grass I slink,  
Snuff the aroma of my mental stink,  
Taste the salt tang of tears upon the brink  
Of my uncomfortable muzzle.  
My tail my beautiful, my lovely tail,  
Is warped.  
My stripes are matted and my coat once sleek  
Hangs rough and undistinguished on my bones.  
O God I was so beautiful when I was well.  
My heart, my lungs, my sinews and my reins  
Consumed a solitary ecstasy,  
And light and pride informed each artery.  
Then I a temple, now a charnel house.  
Then I a high hosannah, now a dirge.  
Then I a recompense of God's endeavour,  
Now a reproach and earnest of lost toil.  
Consider, Lord, a tiger's melancholy  
And heed a minished tiger's muted moan,  
For thou art sleek and shining bright  
And I am weary.  
Thy countenance is full of light  
And mine is dreary.



## THE VIOLENT HAND

Angel most cynical  
Cold and inimical,  
With a smile of brass  
On your cruel face

I think you will irritate me.  
So much that you will make me  
Risk at a touch  
All that is at stake for me.  
If I clutch  
With violent hand the rosary  
You dangle out of reach for me  
I shall find out what it must be  
Taken not given freely, injury.

## HUMAN AFFECTION

Mother, I love you so.  
Said the child, I love you more than I know.  
She laid her head on her mother's arm,  
And the love between them kept them warm.

## A KING IN FUNERAL PROCESSION

He blinks he sighs  
He is alive, they cry.

Give us the body  
Let us see him breathe

Show us the heartbeat  
And the dedicated sleeve.  
He looks ill  
They are satisfied he is looking that way  
It is no more than he should  
He looks ill  
O.K.

De profundis  
The solemn music the tune  
Clamavi  
I have cried unto thee on the loud bassoon  
Clamavi a toto corde meo Domine  
From the desert the stones  
From the rift of this affectionate people  
From my bones.

Lift the baby  
Let her see him  
Lift up the baby  
Give her a lift up then.

Oh Lord I am not high minded  
I have no proud looks  
Not one proud look they have left me  
I am their picture book.

## MURDER

Farewell for ever, well for ever fare,  
The soul whose body lies beneath this stone!  
Tis easy said by one who had a care  
Soul should doff flesh. That has another tone?

My hand brought *Filmer Smith* to this strait bed –  
Well, fare his soul well, fear not I the dead.

## GIRLS!

Girls! although I am a woman  
I always try to appear human

Unlike Miss So-and-So whose greatest pride  
Is to remain always in the VI Form and not let down the side

Do not sell the pass dear, dont let down the side,  
That is what this woman said and a lot of balsy stuff beside  
(Oh the awful balsy nonsense that this woman cried.)

Girls! I will let down the side if I get a chance  
And I will sell the pass for a couple of pence.

## WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Oh where are ye going ye human faces,  
Where are ye going, to what far places,  
Where are ye going, to what distances?

The boat takes the boatman,  
The deep-sea fisher  
Has taken away  
The old world preacher,

This tedious old person who asked such questions  
As drove everybody to exasperation.  
No wonder they all of them cried, Good riddance!

## AUTUMN

He told his life story to Mrs Courtly  
Who was a widow. 'Let us get married shortly,'  
He said. 'I am no longer passionate,  
But we can have some conversation before it is too late.'

## POET!

Poet, thou art dead and damned,  
That speakst upon no moral text.  
I bury one that babbled but; —  
Thou art the next. Thou art the next.

## THE ZOO

The lion sits within his cage,  
Weeping tears of ruby rage,  
He licks his snout, the tears fall down  
And water dusty London town.

He does not like you, little boy,  
It's no use making up to him,  
He does not like you any more  
Than he likes Nurse, or Baby Jim.

Nor would you do if you were he,  
And he were you, for dont you see  
God gave him lovely teeth and claws  
So that he might eat little boys.

So that he might  
In anger slay  
The little lambs  
That skip and play  
Pounce down upon their placid dams  
And make dams flesh to pad his hams.

So that he might  
Appal the night  
With crunching bones  
And awful groans  
Of antelope and buffalo,  
And the unwary hunter whose 'Hallo'  
Tells us his life is over here below.  
There's none to help him, fear inspired,  
Who shouts because his gun misfired.

All this the lion sees, and pants  
Because he knows the hot sun slants  
Between the rancid jungle-grass,  
Which never more shall part to let him pass  
Down to the jungle drinking-hole,  
Whither the zebra comes with her sleek foal.

The sun is hot by day and has his swink,  
And sops up sleepy lions' and tigers' stink,  
But not this lion's stink, poor carnivore,  
He's on the shady shelf for ever more.

His claws are blunt, his teeth fall out,  
No victim's flesh consoles his snout,  
And that is why his eyes are red  
Considering his talents are misused.

## ADVICE TO YOUNG CHILDREN

'Children who paddle where the ocean bed shelves steeply  
Must take great care they do not,  
Paddle too deeply.'

Thus spake the awful aging couple  
Whose heart the years had turned to rubble.

But the little children, to save any bother,  
Let it in at one ear and out at the other.

## THE FACE

There is a face I know too well,  
A face I dread to see,  
So vain it is, so eloquent  
Of all futility.

It is a human face that hides  
A monkey soul within,  
That bangs about, that beats a gong,  
That makes a horrid din.

Sometimes the monkey soul will sprawl  
Athwart the human eyes,  
And peering forth, will flesh its pads,  
And utter social lies.

So wretched is this face, so vain,  
So empty and forlorn,  
You well may say that better far  
This face had not been born.

## IF I LIE DOWN

If I lie down upon my bed I must be here,  
But if I lie down in my grave I may be elsewhere.



## CONVICTION (I)

Christ died for God and me  
Upon the crucifixion tree  
For God a spoken Word  
For me a Sword  
For God a hymn of praise  
For me eternal days  
For God an explanation  
For me salvation.

## CONVICTION (II)

I walked abroad in Easter Park,  
I heard the wild dog's distant bark,  
I knew my Lord was risen again, –  
Wild dog, wild dog, you bark in vain.

## CONVICTION (III)

The shadow was so black,  
I thought it was a cat,  
But once in to it  
I knew it

No more black  
Than a shadow's back.

Illusion is a freak  
Of mind;  
The cat's to seek.

## CONVICTION (IV)

I like to get off with people,  
I like to lie in their arms,  
I like to be held and tightly kissed,  
Safe from all alarms.

I like to laugh and be happy  
With a beautiful beautiful kiss,  
I tell you, in all the world  
There is no bliss like this.



## THE VIRTUOSO

The portrait of my mother,  
In plaster lightly scored,  
Has always protected me  
From anything untoward;  
In Manchester or Italy,  
Wherever I have toured,  
Upon its plinth  
It beholds the zenith  
Of my success on the pianoforte;  
I ask no further reward,  
I ask no further reward.

## VILLAINS

Profit and Batten  
Had coats lined with satin,  
And no wonder either,  
For they never owed a stiver;  
If folks owed them rent,  
They owed at ten per cent.  
Sing Batten and Profit  
If you've got a hat, doff it.

## LE MAJEUR YDOW

'Eh bien ! Marche !', fit le Majeur Ydow,  
'Any more gentlemen like that? *I'll see them off!*'

But there were no gentlemen really, only the phantoms  
He warred with in his perpetual tantrums.

## THE LITTLE DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA

*Pearl Harbour, 1941.*

Admirals Curse-You and No-More  
Set their compasses and sailed for war.

I am sorry that all the little daughters of America  
Should be involved in a thing like this, upon my word.

### SHE SAID . . .

She said as she tumbled the baby in:  
There, little baby, go sink or swim,  
I brought you into the world, what more should I do?  
Do you expect me always to be responsible for you?

QUAND ON N'A PAS CE QUE L'ON  
AIME, IL FAUT AIMER CE QUE L'ON A -

Cold as no love, and wild with all negation -  
Oh Death in Life, the lack of animation.

### THE CONVENTIONALIST

Fourteen-year-old, why must you giggle and dote,  
Fourteen-year-old, why are you such a goat?  
I'm fourteen years old, that is the reason,  
I giggle and dote in season.

## STUDY TO DESERVE DEATH

Study to deserve Death, they only may  
Who fought well upon their earthly day,  
Who never sheathed their swords or ran away.

See, such a man as this now proudly stands,  
Pale in the clasp of Death, and to his hands  
Yields up the sword, but keeps the laurel bands.

Honour and emulate his warrior soul,  
For whom the sonorous death-bells toll;  
He after journeying has reached his goal.

Prate not to me of suicide,  
Faint heart in battle, not for pride  
I say Endure, but that such end denied  
Makes welcomer yet the death that's to be died.

## DIRGE

From a friend's friend I taste friendship,  
From a friend's friend love,  
My spirit in confusion,  
Long years I strove,  
But now I know that never  
Nearer I shall move,  
Than a friend's friend to friendship,  
To love than a friend's love.

Into the dark night  
Resignedly I go,  
I am not so afraid of the dark night

As the friends I do not know,  
I do not fear the night above,  
As I fear the friends below.

## DISTRACTIONS AND THE HUMAN CROWD

Ormerod was deeply troubled  
When he read in philosophy and religion  
Of man's lust after God,  
And the knowledge of God,  
And the experience of God  
In the achievement of solitary communion and the loss of self.  
For he said that he had known this knowledge,  
And experienced this experience,  
Before life and after death;  
But that here in temporal life, and in temporal life only, was  
permitted,  
(As in a flaw of divine government, a voluntary recession),  
A place where man might impinge upon man,  
And be subject to a thousand and one idiotic distractions.  
And thus it was that he found himself  
Ever at issue with the Schools,  
For ever more and more he pursued the distractions,  
Knowing them to be ephemeral, under time, peculiar,  
And in eternity, without place or puff.  
Then, ah then, he said, following the tea-parties,  
(And the innumerable conferences for social rearrangement),  
I knew, and shall know again, the name of God, closer than close;  
But now I know a stranger thing,  
That never can I study too closely, for never will it come again, —  
Distractions and the human crowd.

## BE OFF!

I'm sorry to say my dear wife is a dreamer,  
And as she dreams she gets paler and leaner.  
'Then be off to your Dream, with his fly-away hat,  
I'll stay with the girls who are happy and fat.'

## LOVE ME!

Love me, Love me, I cried to the rocks and the trees,  
And Love me, they cried again, but it was only to tease.  
Once I cried Love me to the people, but they fled like a dream,  
And when I cried Love me to my friend, she began to scream.  
Oh why do they leave me, the beautiful people, and only the rocks  
remain,  
To cry Love me, as I cry Love me, and Love me again.

On the rock a baked sea-serpent lies,  
And his eyelids close tightly over his violent eyes,  
And I fear that his eyes will open and confound me with a  
mirthless word,  
That the rocks will harp on for ever, and my Love me never be  
heard.

## THE WILD DOG

The City Dog goes to the drinking trough,  
He waves his tail and laughs, and goes when he has had enough.  
His intelligence is on the brink  
Of human intelligence. He knows the Council will give him a  
drink.

The Wild Dog is not such an animal,  
Untouched by human kind, he is mimical,  
He keeps his tail stiff, his eyes blink,  
And he goes to the river when he wants a drink.  
He goes to the river, he stamps on the mud,  
And at night he sleeps in the dark wood.

## LADY 'ROGUE' SINGLETON

Come, wed me, Lady Singleton,  
And we will have a baby soon  
And we will live in Edmonton  
Where all the friendly people run.

I could never make you happy, darling,  
Or give you the baby you want,  
I would always very much rather, dear,  
Live in a tent.

I am not a cold woman, Henry,  
But I do not feel for you,  
What I feel for the elephants and the miasmas  
And the general view.

## RENCONTRES FUNESTES

I fear the ladies and gentlemen under the trees,  
Could any of them make an affectionate partner and not tease?—  
Oh, the affectionate sensitive mind is not easy to please.

## THE FILM STAR

Donnez à manger aux affamées  
It is a film star who passes this way  
He is looking so nice the women would like  
To have him on a tray  
Donnez à manger aux affamées.

## THE BOTTLE OF ASPIRINS

'I look at the bottle, when mournful I feel.'  
'C'est une ressource contre tout,' ajouta-t-il,  
(Avec le sombre goûté du pays des suicides  
D'où il était), – 'two hundred and I am freed,'  
He said, 'from anxiety.'

## THE GOVERNESS

The milky love of this bland child  
Her governess has quite beguiled,  
And now they spend the hours talking,  
Sometimes winding wool and sometimes walking.





## THE ACTRESS

I can't say I enjoyed it, but the pay was good.  
Oh how I weep and toil in this world of wood!  
Longing in the city for the pursuit of beautiful scenery,  
I earn my bread upon the Stage, amid painted greenery.  
I have a poet's mind, but a poor exterior,  
What goes on inside me is superior.

## THE DEVIL-MY-WIFE

*To the tune of 'Golden slumbers'.*

The nervous face of my dear wife  
Is covered with a fearful grin,  
And nods and becks  
Come without checks  
As the devils pop out and in.

Gush, then, gush and gabble,  
Vanity is your dabble,  
And in mediocrity  
Is your cruelty.

## THE REPENTANCE OF LADY T

I look in the glass  
Whose face do I see?  
It is the face  
Of Lady T.

I wish to change,  
How can that be?  
Oh Lamb of God  
Change me, change me.

## THE SMILE

When ancient girl is garbed in spite  
And turns to rend, and lives to bite,  
Oh what can end the marriage night?

Wait, wait, (and with a smile); the dawn  
Shall come again, and day return  
As fair as any that has gone.

But if the nature of that smile  
Be mockery, contempt and guile,  
Should such a one my face defile?  
No! rather let me *call* her – Crocodile!

## FORGOT!

There is a fearful solitude  
Within the careless multitude,  
And in the open country too,

He mused, and then it seemed to him  
The solitude lay all within;  
He longed for some interior din:

Some echo from the worldly rout,  
To indicate a common lot,  
Some charge that he might be about,  
But oh he felt that he was quite forgot.

## A MAN I AM

I was consumed by so much hate  
I did not feel that I could wait,  
I could not wait for long at any rate.  
I ran into the forest wild,  
I seized a little new born child,  
I tore his throat, I licked my fang,  
Just like a wolf. A wolf I am.

I ran wild for centuries  
Beneath the immemorial trees,  
Sometimes I thought my heart would freeze,  
And never know a moment's ease.  
But presently the spring broke in  
Upon the pastures of my sin,  
My poor heart bled like anything.  
The drops fell down, I knew remorse,  
I tasted that primordial curse,  
And falling ill, I soon grew worse.  
Until at last I cried on Him,  
Before whom angel faces dim,  
To take the burden of my sin  
And break my head beneath his wing.

Upon the silt of death I swam  
And as I wept my joy began  
Just like a man. A man I am.

## THE WHITE THOUGHT

I shall be glad to be silent, Mother, and hear you speak,  
You encouraged me to tell too much, and my thoughts are weak,  
I shall keep them to myself for a time, and when I am older  
They will shine as a white worm shines under a green boulder.

## IN THE NIGHT

I longed for companionship rather,  
But my companions I always wished farther.  
And now in the desolate night  
I think only of the people I should like to bite.

## THE MAGIC MORNING

The boating party  
Started at dawn from Clarté.  
Lightly lightly they stepped into the green boat  
(The Lady Marion has left behind her golden coat).  
Marion d'Arcy and Charley Dake  
Were the only ones. He rowed her upon the lake.  
He rowed her across the lake until the green shallows  
Paled in a waxen lily litter striped with swallows.  
And now the morning sun flecks the dark trees  
And lightly the mauve sedge moves in a little breeze.

Charley Dake loves the ducal girl  
But her eyelids flick flick upon his thoughts' whirl.  
Oh my ducal girl, cries Charley in a fit  
Of love-spasm. He is Cupid-hit.  
But the Lady Marion smiles and smiles  
And so they go again upon the watery miles.

'Oh Charley, Charley, do not go upon the water'  
Cries a friendly swan, 'with the Duke's daughter.  
You wish to marry er, my boy-carrier? you can not support er  
Oh do not go with the Duke's daughter.'

There is an island in the lake, old brick walled,  
Where the laurestina climbs and is not spoiled.  
What man will spoil the brick walls of their yellow brim?  
Such a one as is nervy bold and grim.  
(Such a one, says the swan, as has something in store for him.)

Flick flick the eyelids of the lady mark  
Where a dark angel flies across her father's park.  
All the green grass shivers in a warning,  
Flee, Charley, flee the magic morning.

But Charley is folly-blind to the visitation  
Of the dark angel of consternation.  
Boldly he plucks a golden cup  
Throws it in Marion's lap and does not look up.

Ah then the thunder peals and the waters bound  
For who took the flower, the angel says, must be drowned.  
So up rears the lake water and drags him underneath  
Where in suffering he draws his last breath.  
'Never more', cries the swan, 'shall Charley be seen,  
He is underneath the waters of the *mis en scène*.'  
(And 'Charley, Charley, Charley' cry the swan-instructed  
curlews  
Ever after as they fly to their nests in the purlieus.)

But the ducal girl comes safe to land and takes her coat,  
And goes off in the likeness of a slim stoat.

## APRÈS LA POLITIQUE, LA HAINE DES BOURBONS

Count Flanders  
Was eaten up with pride;  
His dog Sanders  
Thought only of his inside.

They were a precious couple,  
And let the people feed on straw and rubble.

Bitter was the weather,  
Bitter the people,  
When they flung Count Flanders  
From the church steeple.  
Bitter was the weather,  
Iron the ground,  
When Dog Sanders died of a stomach wound.

## THE POETS ARE SILENT

There's no new spirit abroad,  
As I looked, I saw;  
And I say that it is to the poets' merit  
To be silent about the war.

## THE PLEASURES OF FRIENDSHIP

The pleasures of friendship are exquisite,  
How pleasant to go to a friend on a visit!  
I go to my friend, we walk on the grass,  
And the hours and moments like minutes pass.

## HAPPINESS

Happiness is silent, or speaks equivocally for friends,  
Grief is explicit and her song never ends,  
Happiness is like England, and will not state a case,  
Grief like Guilt rushes in and talks apace.

## LOT'S WIFE

*'In that rich, oil-bearing region, it is probable that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of asphalt – not salt.'*

Sir William Whitebait, Member of the Institute of Mining Engineers

I long for the desolate valleys,  
Where the rivers of asphalt flow,  
For here in the streets of the living,  
Where my footsteps run to and fro,  
Though my smile be never so friendly,  
I offend wherever I go.

Yes, here in the land of the living,  
Though a marriage be fairly sprung,  
And the heart be loving and giving,  
In the end it is sure to go wrong.

Then take me to the valley of asphalt,  
And turn me to a river of stone,  
That no tree may shift to my sighing,  
Or breezes convey my moan.

## THE FOOL

A couple of women is one too many,  
Oh, how I wish I could do without any!

## NO MORE PEOPLE

Passing at my pleasure's pace  
Among each moping angel face,  
Above the sun on the lily-bright air  
I fly my aeroplane here and there.  
The heaven-born plod the heavens over,  
But I, the son of mischief's lover,  
Let the engine carry me. The angels, wing sore,  
Look glum, I guess wish they were earth-born more and more.  
But sometimes I have a feeling that my busy clatter  
Has a mocking echo.  
Than earth-born engine-borne, heaven-born wing-borne is  
better?  
Do they look sideways because they know  
That they will live to see the day when there are no more people?  
All right. All right.  
(I drop my bomb upon a church steeple.)

## HAST DU DICH VERIRRT?

My child, my child, watch how he goes,  
The man in Party coloured clothes.



## SATIN-CLAD

Satin-clad, with many a pearl,  
Is this rich and wretched girl.  
Does she weep? Her tears are crystal,  
And she counts them as they fall.

## UNPOPULAR, LONELY AND LOVING

Unpopular, lonely and loving,  
Elmor need not trouble,  
For if she were not so loving,  
She would not be so miserable.

## ‘CECI EST DIGNE DE GENS SANS DIEU’

Allen

These hands so well articulated  
By brother's life-blood are contaminated  
And still he walks, and still the shadows fall,  
He clasps them. There is nothing there at all.

## WHEN THE SPARROW FLIES

When the sparrow flies to the delicate branch  
He seems to be a heavy one alighting there,  
It is March, and the fine twigs dance  
As the boisterous sparrow plunges masterfully.

Fly again to my heart oh my beloved,  
My heart flies too high when you are absent.

## VOICES AGAINST ENGLAND IN THE NIGHT

'England, you had better go,  
There is nothing else that you ought to do,  
You lump of survival value, you are too slow.

England, you have been here too long,  
And the songs you sing are the songs you sung  
On a braver day. Now they are wrong.

And as you sing the sliver slips from your lips,  
And the governing garment sits ridiculously on your hips.  
It is a pity that you are still too cunning to make slips.'

Dr Goebbels, that is the point,  
You are a few years too soon with your jaunt,  
Time and the moment is not yet England's daunt.

Yes, dreaming Germany with your Urge and Night,  
You must go down before English and American might.  
It is well, it is well, cries the peace kite.

Perhaps England our darling will recover her lost thought  
We must think sensibly about our victory and not be distraught,  
Perhaps America will have an idea, and perhaps not.

But they cried: Could not England, once the world's best,  
Put off her governing garment and be better dressed  
In a shroud, a shroud? O history turn thy pages fast!

## ‘N’EST-CE PAS ASSEZ DE NE ME POINT HAIR?’

Stand off, Mother, let me go!  
The clock upon the shelf is slow  
There wants but half a moment  
E’er I am celled and barred in thy heart’s convent.

Mother, if mother-love enclosure be,  
It were enough, my dear, not quite to hate me.

## THE FAILED SPIRIT

To those who are isolate  
War comes, promising respite,  
Making what seems to be up to the moment the most successful  
endeavour  
Against the fort of the failed spirit that is alone for ever.  
Spurious failed spirit, adamant waste,  
Crop, spirit, crop thy stony pasture!

## THE SLIDING MOUNTAIN

The terrors of the scenery,  
The black rocks of the sliding mountain,  
Are hid from the man of family  
Who lives beneath the fountain.  
His name is Domesticity,  
He’s married to an ivy tree,  
And the little children laugh and scream,  
For they do not know what these things mean.

## THE RECLUSE

My soul within the shades of night,  
Like a languid plant with a fungoid blight,  
Shone out in unearthly damp a bright white light;  
Pashy the ground underfoot where I trod,  
Musing as I passed of the nature of God,  
But on my reverent reveries and fruitful plod  
Of tear-strewn steps, like a wrathful rod  
Fell the touch of a girl, young in years and officious  
Who broke at once at a touch my chain of delicious  
Melancholy. Away flew every ecstasy.  
With ridiculous intention she drew me to the sun,  
My soul's rich languors decried,  
And, e'er I could chide, away did run,  
Leaving my soul undone.  
O too much sun, O wretched presumption,  
O too little wisdom and too much compunction.

### 'I COULD LET TOM GO - BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?'

Since what you want, not what you ought,  
Is the difficult thing to decide,  
I advise you, Amelia, to persevere  
With Duty for your guide.

## CHRISTMAS

A child is born, they cry, a child  
And he is Noble and not Mild  
(It is the child that makes them wild).

The King sits brooding on his throne  
He looks around and calls a man:  
My men bring me a heavy stone.

My men bring me a purple robe  
And bring me whips and iron goad.  
They brought them to him where he strode.

My men bring gold and bring incense  
And fetch all noble children at once  
That I shall never take offence.

The men fetched the noble children away  
They lifted them up and cried: Hurray.  
The King sat back and clapped their play.

All noble mild children are brought home  
To the wicked King who has cast them down  
And ground their bones on the heavy stone.

But the child that is Noble and not Mild  
He lies in his cot. He is unbeguiled.  
He is Noble, he is not Mild,  
And he is born to make men wild.

## TORQUEMADA

Uncle Torquemada,  
does Beppo know about Jesus?



## THE ROMAN ROAD

*A Christian speaks to a Lion in the Arena.*

Oh Lion in a peculiar guise,  
Sharp Roman, road to Paradise,  
Come eat me up, I'll pay thy toll  
With all my flesh, and keep my soul.

## THE CASTLE

I married the Earl of Egremont,  
I never saw him by day,  
I had him in bed at night,  
And cuddled him tight.

We had two boys, twins,  
Tommy and Roly,  
Roly was so fat  
We called him Roly-poly.

Oh that was a romantic time,  
The castle had such a lonely look,  
The estate,  
Heavy with cockle and spurge,  
Lay desolate.

The ocean waves  
Lapped in the castle caves.

Oh I love the ramshackle castle,  
And the room  
Where our sons were born.

Oh I love the wild  
Parkland,  
The mild  
Sunshine.

Underneath the wall  
Sleeps our pet toad,  
There the hollyhocks grow tall.

My children never saw their father,  
Do not know,  
He sleeps in my arms each night  
Till cockcrow.

Oh I love the ramshackle castle,  
And the turret room  
Where our sons were born.

## TO DEAN INGE LECTURING ON ORIGEN

Listen, all of you, listen, all of you,  
This way wisdom lies,  
To reconcile with the simplicity of God  
His contingent pluralities.

Oh, the wise man sat in his chair,  
And oh, the people they would not hear,  
They said, It is much too deep for us,  
As they turned to the Differential Calculus.

Oh, if the people had only heard  
Him,  
Oh, if that wise man's word was not blurred,  
Not dimmed.

## BEHIND THE KNIGHT

Behind the Knight sits hooded Care,  
And as he rides she speaks him fair,  
She lays her hand in his sable muff,  
Ride he never so fast he'll not cast her off.



## HAROLD'S LEAP

Harold, are you asleep?  
Harold, I remember your leap,  
It may have killed you  
But it was a brave thing to do.  
Two promontories ran high into the sky,  
He leapt from one rock to the other  
And fell to the sea's smother.  
Harold was always afraid to climb high,  
But something urged him on,  
He felt he should try.  
I would not say that he was wrong,  
Although he succeeded in doing nothing but die.  
Would you?  
Ever after that steep  
Place was called Harold's Leap.  
It was a brave thing to do.

## A MOTHER'S HEARSE

The love of a mother for her child  
Is not necessarily a beautiful thing  
It can be compounded of pride and show  
And exalt the self above every thing.

Oh why is that child so spoilt and horrible?  
His mother has never neglected the trouble  
Of giving him his will at every turn  
And that is why his eyes do burn.

His eyes do burn with a hungry fire  
His fingers clutch at the air and do not tire  
He is a persecuting force  
And as he grows older he grows worse.

And for his sake the friends are put down  
And the happy people do not come round,  
In pride and hostility against the world  
This family upon itself is now curled.

Oh wretched they and wretched the friend  
And this will continue without end  
And all for a mother's love it was,  
I say it were better a mother's hearse.

## TOUCH AND GO

Man is coming out of the mountains  
But his tail is caught in the pass.  
Why does he not free himself  
Is he not an ass?

Do not be impatient with him  
He is bowed with passion and fret  
He is not out of the mountains  
He is not half out yet.

Look at his sorrowful eyes  
His torn cheeks, his brow  
He lies with his head in the dust  
Is there no one to help him now?

No, there is no one to help him  
Let him get on with it  
Cry the ancient enemies of man  
As they cough and spit.

The enemies of man are like trees  
They stand with the sun in their branches  
Is there no one to help my creature  
Where he languishes?

Ah, the delicate creature  
He lies with his head in the rubble  
Pray that the moment pass  
And the trouble.

Look he moves, that is more than a prayer,  
But he is so slow  
Will he come out of the mountains?  
It is touch and go.

## MAN IS A SPIRIT

Man is a spirit. This the poor flesh knows,  
Yet serves him well for host when the wind blows,  
Why should this guest go wrinkling up his nose?



## THOUGHT IS SUPERIOR

Thought is superior to dress and circumstance,  
It is thought pure thought that sets the world in a dance.  
And what is the greatest thought since the world begun?  
Galileo's discovery that the earth goes round the sun.

## THE RIVER GOD

I may be smelly and I may be old,  
Rough in my pebbles, reedy in my pools,  
But where my fish float by I bless their swimming  
And I like the people to bathe in me, especially women.  
But I can drown the fools  
Who bathe too close to the weir, contrary to rules.  
And they take a long time drowning  
As I throw them up now and then in a spirit of clowning.  
Hi yih, yippity-yap, merrily I flow,  
Oh I may be an old foul river but I have plenty of go.  
Once there was a lady who was too bold  
She bathed in me by the tall black cliff where the water runs cold,  
So I brought her down here  
To be my beautiful dear.  
Oh will she stay with me will she stay  
This beautiful lady, or will she go away?  
She lies in my beautiful deep river bed with many a weed  
To hold her, and many a waving reed.  
Oh who would guess what a beautiful white face lies there  
Waiting for me to smooth and wash away the fear  
She looks at me with. Hi yih, do not let her  
Go. There is no one on earth who does not forget her  
Now They say I am a foolish old smelly river  
But they do not know of my wide original bed  
Where the lady waits, with her golden sleepy head.  
If she wishes to go I will not forgive her.

## COOL AS A CUCUMBER

Cool as a cucumber calm as a mill pond sound as a bell  
Was Mary  
When she went to the *Wishing Well*.

But a fairy came up out of the well  
And cursed her up hill and down dale  
And cursed her from midnight to morning hail.

And now she gets worse and worse  
Ever since she listened to the fairy's curse  
*She is nervy grim and bold*  
Looks over her left shoulder and does not do as she is told.

She is quite unfit for marriage  
Of course  
Since she listened to the fairy's curse  
She grows worse and worse.

Starts off by herself each day  
In a most unusual way  
But nobody seems to know which way.

She looks pale, really unhealthy,  
And moves so queerly, rather stealthy.

Mary come back to me,  
Cried one who loved her.  
He is the miller's son.  
And when she heard him she broke into a run.

She has not been seen since then.  
If you ask me she'll not be seen again.

## THE ORPHAN REFORMED

The orphan is looking for parents  
She roams the world over  
Looking for parents and cover.  
She looks at this pair and that  
Cries, Father, Mother,  
Likes these, does not like those,  
Stays for a time; goes.  
Crying, Oh hearts of stone.  
But really she is better alone.  
Orphan, the people who will not be your parents are not evil,  
Not the devil.  
But still she cries, Father, Mother  
Must I be alone for ever?  
Yes you must. Oh wicked orphan, oh rebellion,  
Must an orphan not be alone is that your opinion?  
At last the orphan is reformed. Now quite  
Alone she goes; now she is right.  
Now when she cries, Father, Mother, it is only to please.  
Now the people do not mind, now they say she is a mild tease.

## A SHOOTING INCIDENT

Man does not live by bread alone  
Nor die alone for lack of it  
For he may be well fed, and die,  
Well housed, well married, still may die.  
There is a hunger of the heart  
Will slay him, though each day he feast  
On bread and wine, and go well drest,  
And such a one was Colonel Yeast.

He was a noble simple man  
But all within his heart was black  
And as he walked the way along  
He cried, alas alack,  
And cried and sighed and sighed and cried,  
I am a long-delayèd suicide.  
It was as though a fiend had swung  
Him by the toe when he was young  
And swung him so  
And to and fro  
And swore and said he should be most oppressed  
When most against a loving friend he pressed.  
And now he walks with gun and roar –  
He is a colonel in the Indian Army –  
Sporting upon a tiger's spoor  
And with him goes his faithful escort, Harmi.  
Oh Harmi dear I love the sun  
And all the crooked jungle path  
But most the water holes I love  
With creatures peering from above.  
Why do I pick the wilder animal?  
It is because he is not fanciful.  
I had a dog in England once,  
I loved him well, his name was Bunce,  
And now I think I see him here,  
And as I think, the scene grows clear,  
An English scene. The colonel sighed.  
The musty fells lay open wide  
Upon his loving thought,  
And dog Bunce ran again to start  
The timid hare, and play his part  
As he was taught.  
Wild creatures' eyes, the colonel said,  
Are innocent and fathomless,  
And when I look at them I see





All red from toe to heel  
Then in my dream I rose and fled,  
Crying, The dog, the dog is dead.  
Now, Harmi, mark, when daylight came,  
My night and dream to shatter through  
My dog came and so looked at me  
I said, Why, Bunce, what's the matter with you?  
Oh day and night, oh Holy Dove,  
We slay the thing we most do love,  
And it is pitiful to see  
Our friends live but in memory.  
But they are safe in memory  
And are they not? the colonel said,  
He turned and looked at Harmi so  
That Harmi dropped his gun and fled.  
When he came back again he found  
The colonel dying of a wound,  
And crying close upon the ground:  
Oh bright bright blood that flows so bright  
Within the wound myself did make  
Oh jungle grass that drinks it up  
And with my life thy thirst doth slake  
Why has my hand this hour postponed  
That sees me now with dust conjoined?  
The Indian's tears fell like a blot  
Upon the colonel's face  
And carefully before he left  
He put his hands in place.  
Later upon his tomb, now grave now gay,  
He daily danced to keep the fiends away.

## 'OH STUBBORN RACE OF CADMUS' SEED ...'

It is the bird of burial  
I invoke for my brother's funeral.  
I throw the dust in Creon's eyes  
Not my father is blind but my uncle is.  
And when they have killed me I shall stand in the Dark Hall  
And cry: Orcus, see that my sister does not suffer at all.

## THE AMBASSADOR

Underneath the broad hat is the face of the Ambassador  
He rides on a white horse through hell looking two ways.  
Doors open before him and shut when he has passed.  
He is master of the mysteries and in the market place  
He is known. He stole the trident, the girdle,  
The sword, the sceptre and many mechanical instruments.  
Thieves honour him. In the underworld he rides carelessly.  
Sometimes he rises into the air and flies silently.

## PERSEPHONE

I am that Persephone  
Who played with her darlings in Sicily  
Against a background of social security.

Oh what a glorious time we had  
Or had we not? They said it was sad  
I had been good, grown bad.

Oh can you wonder can you wonder  
I struck the doll-faced day asunder  
Stretched out and plucked the flower of winter thunder?

Then crashed the sky and the earth smoked  
Where are father and mother now? Ah, croaked  
The door-set crone, Sun's cloaked.

Up came the black horses and the dark King  
And the harsh sunshine was as if it had never been  
In the halls of Hades they said I was queen.

My mother, my darling mother,  
I loved you more than any other,  
Ah mother, mother, your tears smother.

No not for my father who rules  
The fair fields of Italy and sunny fools  
Do I mourn where the earth cools.

But my mother, I loved and left her  
And of a fair daughter bereft her,  
Grief cleft her.

Oh do not fret me  
Mother, let me  
Stay, forget me.

But still she seeks sorrowfully,  
Calling me bitterly  
By name, Persephone.

I in my new land learning  
Snow-drifts on the fingers burning,  
Ice, hurricane, cry: No returning.

Does my husband the King know, does he guess  
In this wintriness  
Is my happiness?

## DO TAKE MURIEL OUT

Do take Muriel out  
She is looking so glum  
Do take Muriel out  
All her friends have gone.

And after too much pressure  
Looking for them in the Palace  
She goes home to too much leisure  
And this is what her life is.

All her friends are gone  
And she is alone  
And she looks for them where they have never been  
And her peace is flown.

Her friends went into the forest  
And across the river  
And the desert took their footprints  
And they went with a believer.

Ah they are gone they were so beautiful  
And she can not come to them  
And she kneels in her room at night  
Crying, Amen.

Do take Muriel out  
Although your name is Death  
She will not complain  
When you dance her over the blasted heath.

## THE WEAK MONK

The monk sat in his den,  
He took the mighty pen  
And wrote 'Of God and Men.'

One day the thought struck him  
It was not according to Catholic doctrine;  
His blood ran dim.

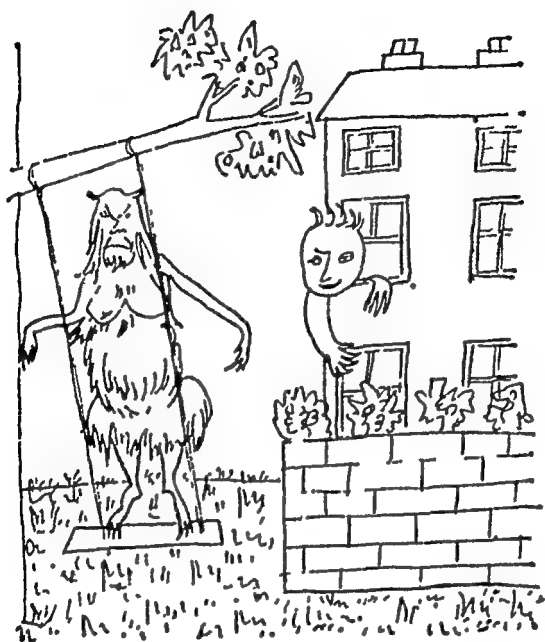
He wrote till he was ninety years old,  
Then he shut the book with a clasp of gold  
And buried it under the sheep fold.

He'd enjoyed it so much, he loved to plod,  
And he thought he'd a right to expect that God  
Would rescue his book alive from the sod.

Of course it rotted in the snow and rain;  
No one will ever know now what he wrote of God and men.  
For this the monk is to blame.

# LE SINGE QUI SWING

*To the tune of Green-sleeves.*



Outside the house  
The swinging ape  
Swung to and fro,  
Swung to and fro,  
And when midnight shone so clear  
He was still swinging there.

Oh ho the swinging ape,  
The happy peaceful animal,  
Oh ho the swinging ape,  
I love to see him gambol.

## THE BROKEN FRIENDSHIP

'My heart is fallen in despair'  
Said Easter Ross to Jolie Bear.  
Jolie answered never a word  
But passed her plate as if she had not heard.

Mrs Ross is took to her bed  
And kept her eye fixed on the bed-rail peg  
'When I am dead roll me under the barrow,  
And who but pretty Jolie shall carry the harrow.'

Jolie Bear is gone away  
Easter Ross's heart is broke,  
Everything went out of her  
When Jolie never spoke.

## THE AFTER-THOUGHT

Rapunzel Rapunzel let down your hair  
It is I your beautiful lover who am here  
And when I come up this time I will bring a rope ladder with me  
And then we can both escape into the dark wood immediately.  
This must be one of those things, as Edgar Allan Poe says  
somewhere in a book,  
Just because it is perfectly obvious one is certain to overlook.

I wonder sometimes by the way if Poe isn't a bit introspective,  
One can stand about getting rather reflective,  
But thinking about the way the mind works, you know,  
Makes one inactive, one simply doesn't know which way to go;  
Like the centipede in the poem who was corrupted by the toad  
And ever after never did anything but lie in the middle of the road,



Or the old gurus of India I've seen, believe it or not,  
Standing seventy five years on their toes until they dropped.  
Or Titurel, for that matter, in his odd doom  
Crying ' I rejoice because by the mercy of the Saviour I continue to  
live in the tomb.

What is that darling? You cannot hear me?  
That's odd. I can hear you quite distinctly.

## THE WANDERER

'Twas the voice of the Wanderer, I heard her exclaim,  
You have weaned me too soon, you must nurse me again,  
She taps as she passes at each window pane,  
Pray, does she not know that she taps in vain?

Her voice flies away on the midnight wind,  
But would she be happier if she were within?  
She is happier far where the night winds fall,  
And there are no doors and no windows at all.

No man has seen her, this pitiful ghost,  
And no woman either, but heard her at most,  
Sighing and tapping and sighing again,  
You have weaned me too soon, you must nurse me again.

## NO CATEGORIES!

I cry I cry  
To God who created me  
Not to you Angels who frustrated me  
Let me fly, let me die,  
Let me come to Him.

Not to you Angels on the wing,  
With your severe faces,  
And your scholarly grimaces,  
And your do this and that,  
And your exasperating pit-pat  
Of appropriate admonishment.

That is not what the Creator meant.  
In the day of his gusty creation  
He made this and that  
And laughed to see them grow fat.

Plod on, you Angels say, do better aspire higher  
And one day you may be like us, or those next below us,  
Or nearer the lowest,  
Or lowest,  
Doing their best.

Oh no no, you Angels, I say,  
No hierarchies I pray.

Oh God, laugh not too much aside  
Say not, it is a small matter.  
See what your Angels do, scatter  
Their pride, laugh them away.

Oh no categories I pray.

## THE DESERTER

The world is come upon me, I used to keep it a long way off,  
But now I have been run over and I am in the hands of the hospital  
staff.

They say as a matter of fact I have not been run over it's  
imagination,

But they all admit I shall be kept in bed under observation.  
I must say it's very comfortable here, nurse has such nice hands,  
And every morning the doctor come and lances my tuberculous  
glands.

He says he does nothing of the sort, but I have my own feelings  
about that,

And what they are if you don't mind I shall keep under my hat.  
My friend, if you call it a friend, has left me; he says I am a  
deserter to ill health,

And that the things I should think about have made off for ever,  
and so has my wealth.

Portentous ass, what to do about him's no strain  
I shall quite simply never speak to the fellow again.

## I RODE WITH MY DARLING ...

I rode with my darling in the dark wood at night  
And suddenly there was an angel burning bright  
Come with me or go far away he said  
But do not stay alone in the dark wood at night.

My darling grew pale he was responsible  
He said we should go back it was reasonable  
But I wished to stay with the angel in the dark wood at night.

My darling said goodbye and rode off angrily  
And suddenly I rode after him and came to a cornfield  
Where had my darling gone and where was the angel now?  
The wind bent the corn and drew it along the ground  
And the corn said, Do not go alone in the dark wood.

Then the wind drew more strongly and the black clouds covered  
the moon  
And I rode into the dark wood at night.

There was a light burning in the trees but it was not the angel  
And in the pale light stood a tall tower without windows  
And a mean rain fell and the voice of the tower spoke,  
Do not stay alone in the dark wood at night.

The walls of the pale tower were heavy, in a heavy mood  
The great stones stood as if resisting without belief.  
Oh how sad sighed the wind, how disconsolately,  
Do not ride alone in the dark wood at night.

Loved I once my darling? I love him not now.  
Had I a mother beloved? She lies far away.  
A sister, a loving heart? My aunt a noble lady?  
All all is silent in the dark wood at night.

## GOD AND MAN

Man is my darling, my love and my pain,  
My pleasure, my excitement, and my love again,  
My wisdom, my courage, my power, my all,  
Oh Man, do not come to me until I call.

In man is my life, and in man is my death,  
He is my hazard, my pride and my breath,  
I sought him, I wrought him, I pant on his worth,  
In him I experience indeterminate growth.

Oh Man, Man, of all my animals dearest,  
Do not come till I call, though thou weariest first.

## MR OVER

Mr Over is dead  
He died fighting and true  
And on his tombstone they wrote  
Over to You.

And who pray is this You  
To whom Mr Over is gone?  
Oh if we only knew that  
We should not do wrong.

But who is this beautiful You  
We all of us long for so much  
Is he not our friend and our brother  
Our father and such?

Yes he is this and much more  
This is but a portion  
A sea-drop in a bucket  
Taken from the ocean

So the voices spake  
Softly above my head  
And a voice in my heart cried: Follow  
Where he has led

And a devil's voice cried: Happy  
Happy the dead.

## MY CATS

I like to toss him up and down  
A heavy cat weighs half a Crown  
With a hey do diddle my cat Brown.

I like to pinch him on the sly  
When nobody is passing by  
With a hey do diddle my cat Fry.

I like to ruffle up his pride  
And watch him skip and turn aside  
With a hey do diddle my cat Hyde.

Hey Brown and Fry and Hyde my cats  
That sit on tombstone for your mats.

## DRUGS MADE PAULINE VAGUE

Drugs made Pauline vague.  
She sat one day at the breakfast table  
Fingering in a baffled way  
The fronds of the maidenhair plant.

Was it the salt you were looking for dear?  
Said Dulcie, exchanging a glance with the Brigadier.

Chuff chuff Pauline what's the matter?  
Said the Brigadier to his wife  
Who did not even notice  
What a handsome couple they made.

## OUR BOG IS DOOD

Our Bog is dood, our Bog is dood,  
They lisped in accents mild,  
But when I asked them to explain  
They grew a little wild.  
How do you know your Bog is dood  
My darling little child?

We know because we wish it so  
That is enough, they cried,  
And straight within each infant eye  
Stood up the flame of pride,  
And if you do not think it so  
You shall be crucified.

Then tell me, darling little ones,  
What's dood, suppose Bog is?  
Just what we think, the answer came,  
Just what we think it is.  
They bowed their heads. Our Bog is ours  
And we are wholly his.

But when they raised them up again  
They had forgotten me

Each one upon each other glared  
In pride and misery  
For what was dood, and what their Bog  
They never could agree.

Oh sweet it was to leave them then,  
And sweeter not to see,  
And sweetest of all to walk alone  
Beside the encroaching sea,  
The sea that soon should drown them all,  
That never yet drowned me.

## WRETCHED WOMAN



Wretched woman that thou art  
How thou piercest to my heart  
With thy misery and graft  
And thy lack of household craft.



## LIGHTLY BOUND

You beastly child, I wish you had miscarried,  
You beastly husband, I wish I had never married.  
You hear the north wind riding fast past the window? He calls me.  
Do you suppose I shall stay when I can go so easily?

## LE REVENANT

My Uncle from the realms of Death  
Returned to draw an earthly breath  
And as he walked upon the heath  
The wild wind whistled through his teeth.

He came unto a habitation  
That was the centre of the nation  
He knocked upon each house and said:  
It is much better to be dead.

And when they stoned him from the door  
He vowed he would come back no more.

## TO SCHOOL!

Let all the little poets be gathered together in classes  
And let prizes be given to them by the Prize Asses  
And let them be sure to call all the little poets young  
And worse follow what's bad begun  
But do not expect the Muse to attend this school  
Why look already how far off she has flown, she is no fool.

## TO AN AMERICAN PUBLISHER

You say I must write *another* book? But I've just written this one.  
You liked it so much that's the reason? Read it again then.

## THE REHEARSAL

I always admire a beautiful woman  
And I've brought you some flowers for your beautiful bosom.

## DEATH-BED OF A FINANCIER

Deal not with me God as I have dealt with Man  
In the prosperity which thou hast given me  
Helpless in his need a careless course I ran  
And now oh Lord that thou hast driven me  
To my last gasp, I pray for all I am not worth  
Deal not with me as I have dealt on earth.

## THE HAT

I love my beautiful hat more than anything  
And through my beautiful hat I see a wedding ring  
The King will marry me and make me his own before all  
And when I am married I shall wear my hat and walk on the  
palace wall.

## THE RIDE

Riding slowly along the banks of a canal  
Where the dredges had been at work and the slime lay piled,  
I rode in Egypt slowly, slowly with Captain Fairchild,  
Under a black sun, on an oppressive afternoon.  
Pricking our dull horses to an even pace  
We rode beside the black slime, mile upon mile,  
Between the slime mounds, beside the black deep water.  
Suddenly the captain turning smiled into my face,  
Smiling with a black smile, pale beneath his burnt skin,  
Smiling he said, If the Sultana of Istanbul  
Had in her Household a Grand Vizier so old  
That he was alive in the Napolconic Wars,  
What is it, he said, she would most wish him to forget?  
My hand for a moment lay slack upon the rein,  
And my horse checking stood still with lowered head,  
Oh, I said carelessly, the slime and the black slime,  
The slime and the length and the slime  
Of the ramshackle Ottoman Empire.  
Well my dear chap, said the Captain smiling,  
It always comes to that, but we know do we not,  
That the slime and the black slime is something we can parry  
With a Byronic connotation and a note in time.

## I AM

Far from normal far from normal far from normal I am  
He sighed as he stood on the river bank and watched where the  
fishes swam  
But ever the wind in the willow trees whispered, I am; I am.  
He saw the variety of nature

The ant the mole and the sky  
And resignedly hurried upon his way  
Crying: I, I; I, I;

Then a priest came and told him if he was good  
And thought as he ought and did as he should  
He should be saved by the Lamb's fresh blood.

Oh I know, I know the poor man cries,  
I know the worth of the heavenly prize  
And I know the strength of the race to be run  
But my black heart cleaves to the strength of my gun.

Then he put his gun to his head and shot  
Crying absurdly, I am not.

## THE CROWN OF BAYS

They gave him a crown of bays and dressed him up,  
But he was listless though famous, he had had enough.  
He looked at the audience, they are clapping knaves,  
And turning to the Winged Form, Who are you? he says.  
'I am the Angel of the Considered Bays.'  
When you go back I will follow you, he said.  
'To do that, you must be dead.'  
I ask it; this people is a basket.

He laid his head in the angel's lap,  
Oh let me come with you, let me come.  
'Can you say farewell to the people in deep slumbers  
Who travel by the Underground railway with happy faces in  
numbers?'  
These, and these  
He said (thinking of the sleepers and the audience) tease,

Let me come with you.

'Only those who expect everything are prepared to take nothing,'

Said the angel slyly, as posing a conundrum,

'Death may be that.'

Still lead; I follow, pat pat.

'Can you say farewell to the Natural Beauties?'

Yes, I look at them through a glass cage, the glaze sullies.

The angel waved a hand and under a tree,

A mighty chestnut whose fine branches

The spring with white flowers enhances,

Lay the bay-crowned Misery.

Oh Angel of Bays, he cries, weeping bitterly,

You have forged a dagger with your visions for my penalty,

Crack my heart, pierce throat, I will come with you,

I only used to think it was worth while living for the view.

How beautiful the sky is that is bright blue

Through the green leaves, and the sun warms through and  
through

Before a man hangs they give him what he likes to eat,

So you have given me what I like to see, the trees and no street,

Now to the scaffold, Angel, do your part,

I will come with you. (The angel stabs him to the heart.)

As he lay bleeding his last into the untrod earth

He smiled a happy smile and said:

I had a philosophy of use and wont, it was bad;

I conceded that life was a balance with

Only three ha'pence to the liver's credit.

But to live with three ha'pence was a merit.

I held that nothing to have not wholly bad not wholly good

Was a young man's dream and juvenile aspiration,

Now I am come to that young man's situation,

And expecting everything gladly receive annihilation.

'You receive what I do not know,'  
Said the angel, and with this word  
Flies away and leaves him lying upon the sward.  
But over his shoulder airborne came these last words, 'Briefly  
In my opinion for what it is worth, you die trivially.'

A JEW IS ANGRY WITH HIS  
FRIEND WHO DOES NOT  
BELIEVE IN CIRCUMCISION

Oh ho uncircumcised Sadducee I see  
In all created time not one as thee  
Befoul the cradle whence he came  
Take a great name and make it a great shame  
Take it and make it on the lips of the heathen a gibe  
Not the name of a sect, not Sadducee, Pharisee or Scribe  
But Jew Jew Jew  
Should have taught you all that we knew  
With a racial knowledge in the Pentateuchal days of old  
Before the time had come for Sadducees to be so very bold  
As to be so bold as to be too modern for circumcision  
Oh mockery of Greek and Roman, oh derision  
Of the derided  
Now I have you, mannikin, depend  
I'll dock you of your foreskin and something else that will end  
All hope of posterity, no little Sadducees will you beget  
When I've finished with you, but sit in a eunochy fret  
Waiting for death to relieve you of a hated life  
You look a little pale? What ho, a knife, a knife.

## FROM THE COPTIC

Three angels came to the red red clay  
Where in a heap it formless lay,

Stand up, stand up, thou lazy red clay,  
Stand up and be Man this happy day.

Oh in its bones the red clay groaned,  
And why should I do such a thing? it said,  
And take such a thing on my downy head?  
Then the first angel stood forth and said,

Thou shalt have happiness, thou shalt have pain,  
And each shall fall turn and about again,  
And no man shall say when the day shall fall  
That thou shalt be happy or not at all.

And the second angel said much the same  
While the red clay lay flat in the falling rain,  
Crying, I will stay clay and take no blame.

Then the third angel rose up and said,  
Listen thou clay, raise thy downy head,  
When thou hast heard what I have to say  
Thou shalt rise Man and go man's way.

What have you to promise? the red clay moans,  
What have you in store for my future bones?  
I am Death, said the angel, and death is the end,  
I am Man, cries clay rising, and you are my friend.

## A HUMANE MATERIALIST AT THE BURNING OF A HERETIC

When shall that fuel fed fire grown fatter  
Burn to consumption and a pitter patter  
Of soft ash falling in a formless scatter  
Telling Mind's death in a dump of Matter.

### IN PROTOCREATION

In protocreations  
Is my imagination  
And in the world's first emergence from gaseous fire  
My desire.  
Then heaved the earth  
In a first vegetable birth  
Later according to the record  
Experimental animals walked abroad.  
The awkward pterodactyl  
The brontosaurus  
The mammoth and the early lizard  
Were before us.  
Oh had it but stopped then  
Oh had there not come men.  
Earth fired  
And the seas smoked  
Heavy heavy swung the swamp  
Crust broke and the mountains poked.  
Oh had it but stopped then  
Oh had there not come men.  
In that high and early time  
There was no good deed and no crime  
No oppression by informed mind  
No knowledge and no human kind.



## DO NOT!



Do not despair of man, and do not scold him,  
Who are you that you should so lightly hold him?  
Are you not also a man, and in your heart  
Are there not warlike thoughts and fear and smart?  
Are you not also afraid and in fear cruel,  
Do you not think of yourself as usual,  
Faint for ambition, desire to be loved,  
Prick at a virtuous thought by beauty moved?  
You love your wife, you hold your children dear,  
Then say not that Man is vile, but say they are.  
But they are not. So is your judgement shown  
Presumptuous, false, quite vain, merely your own  
Sadness for failed ambition set outside,  
Made a philosophy of, prinked, beautified  
In noble dress and into the world sent out  
To run with the ill it most pretends to rout.  
Oh know your own heart, that heart's not wholly evil,  
And from the particular judge the general,  
If judge you must, but with compassion see life,  
Or else, of yourself despairing, flee strife.

## THE DEATH SENTENCE

Cold as No Plea,  
Yet wild with all negation,  
Weeping I come  
To my heart's destination,  
To my last bed  
Between th' unhallowed boards—  
The Law allows it  
And the Court awards.

## THE COMMUTED SENTENCE

Shut me not alive away  
From the light of every day  
Hang me rather by the neck to die  
Against a morning sky.

Oh shut me not behind a prison wall  
I have a horror of this sort of place  
Where I may sit and count the hours pass  
And never see a smiling human face.

Here is all straight and narrow as a tomb  
Oh shut me not within a little room.

## THE CELTIC FRINGE

Kathleen ni Houlihan  
Walking down the boule-igan  
Ran into a hooligan  
Ah ha, Kathleen ni Houlihan.

She went with the rat-ican  
And very soon they had a brat-ican  
Ah ha, Kathleen ni Houlihan  
How goes it now?

They called him Rebel-can  
Oh he was a devil-can  
Kathleen ni Houlihan  
Your son.

And the big black cat-ican  
That sat on the mat-ican  
With a pit and a pati-can  
Spit. Spat.

Was the chief sport  
Of the Houlihan sort  
And chiefly did Rebel-can  
Twitch his tail, the devil-can.

All up the boule-igan  
Runs Kathleen ni Houlihan  
For flirting his tail the cat is gone,  
They are alone.

And that is how the Houlihan  
Fell out in the boule-igan  
Whose tail shall they twitch now?  
Eh, Kathleen, the cat is gone.

## THE LEADER

Men fear the hollow man at the top of the tree  
He is supported they say by a phoney majority  
But the squirrel brings nuts and the mole brings meal  
And the cock brings the spur from the tip of his heel  
And they none of them dare say what they feel  
For he kills as he wills does that horrible He  
Who sits at the top of the old oak tree.

Oh foolish they are who keep his rules  
And bring him food, they are surely fools  
When it is plain as a pikestaff bold  
They should run him out in the cold, cold, cold  
Or burn him up in the hot fury  
Of a flame that will lick to the top of a tree.

Oh if they only had some sense  
The squirrel might store for her own expense  
The cock at his heel find a use for the spur  
And the mole with the meal sleek the young mole's fur.

But they will not do it, they are so frightened  
Of what they have raised and the tree has heightened  
Then come along come with a sigh and a leap  
For this people runs mad in the Fuehrer Prinzip.

Yes they will have a lord and it matters not who  
Be he hollow as a drum he will do, do, do.

## OH, IF ONLY . . .

The intellectual Englishman shrank away from the bedside.  
There in the bed lay the Englishwoman Blah in the arms of Captain  
Thomas.  
Oh, the ineffable smug look of Blah (thought the young  
intellectual)  
The satisfaction, the noble-animal dignity, the imperial  
carelessness!  
As Blah lay smiling in her sleep, a shadow crossed the face of  
Thomas.  
He awoke, and putting his arm across Blah's breast  
He stared in a sullen and offended manner at the young intellectual.  
Go to hell, cried Thomas. Go to hell, cried the young intellectual.  
A purely nervous situation for you I fancy, sneered Thomas.  
The young intellectual crept weeping away,  
Oh, if he could only experience emotional extravagance!

## WHO SHOT EUGENIE?

We had ridden three days Eugenie and I  
And kept hidden  
By an unnecessary habitual caution  
The papers of our commission.

How blank is the heart when on service bent  
Empty of all but official content  
So inappropriate is all individual consideration  
So impossible in the individual a communal realization  
Of states', peoples', any group-mind's preoccupation,  
That a girl in the service of her country at war  
Must have a mind as blank as a wall

Apt only to carry  
The terms of her commission and hurry.

Eugenie and I in an open deserted country  
Had travelled till nightfall of the third day  
When putting our horses at a hedge at the top of a hill,  
Up and over,  
We found ourselves under cover  
Of a mighty forest whose pines' green needles  
Fallen carpeted the ground and silenced our horses' footfall.

Now night was entrenched and over our head the stars  
Shone out their fitful rather disturbing light  
That hardly served to penetrate the gloomy thread  
Of the long forest ride we rode upon.

Why is it starlight so disturbs our kind  
Dissipates the purposes of the human mind  
Emptying familiar things of all significance  
Setting the thoughts in an inconsequent dance  
And making the loftiest and ruling of them sit mumchance?  
I said no word of this to her nor she to me,  
We were old campaigners both of us you see,  
Only we rode, she as I, distracted  
And the heart had gone out of us both and the virtue,  
We rode in silence.

Hour by hour of the night we rode and the sickle moon  
Clearing the feathered treetops soared overhead  
And the path we followed led always towards the north,  
Skirting a lake. We saw where the arms of trees  
Old wood and rotten and allowed to rot and to fall  
When it should have been chopped and cherished in the service of  
nations

(According to the best interpretation of King's Regulations)  
Broke surface.

Over our shoulders from the right the moonlight shimmered  
Down and across the waters of the forest lake  
Making in semblance more sombre the shadowy margin.  
We were glad to leave it, the sombre sinister pool,  
And rode till daylight came and the cold dawn wind,  
And the stars grew pale, and the moon sank down on the west.

In the gray of the early day we dismounted and watered our beasts,  
And breakfasted there by the side of the cold clear spring,  
And tethered our horses, and lay and rested and slept,  
The sleep of exhaustion And still no sound,  
No least hurry or flurry of wild birds moving,  
Spoke of the alien presence of human beings,  
The forest enclosed us around and my dreams were always  
Of ways without ending and passively hostile Nature,  
Of forests deploying and advancing with the power of death  
In the huddle of trees and the treacherous undergrowth.

The sun was hot on my face when I woke, and Eugenie was dead,  
Shot, with a bullet through her head.  
Yet every chamber in her revolver was full to plenty  
And only in my own is there one that is empty.

## FULL WELL I KNOW

Full well I know the flinty heart  
That beats beneath those gentle airs  
That asks the people to her hearth  
But for a writer's cares  
That asks them from below above  
But only to observe, not love.

Then also as a writer she must fail  
Since art without compassion can't avail?

## VOICES ABOUT THE PRINCESS ANEMONE

Underneath the tangled tree  
Lies the pale Anemone.

She was the first who ever wrote  
The word of fear, and tied it round her throat.

She ran into the forest wild  
And there she lay and never smiled.

Sighing, Oh my word of fear  
You shall be my only dear.

They said she was a princess lost  
To an inheritance beyond all cost.

She feared too much they said, but she says, No,  
My wealth is a golden reflection in the stream below.

She bends her head, her hands dip in the water  
Fear is a band of gold on the King's daughter.

## DEEPLY MORBID

Deeply morbid deeply morbid was the girl who typed the letters  
Always out of office hours or social betters  
But when daylight and the office closed about 1



Not for this ah not for this her office colleagues came to doubt her  
It was that look within her eye  
Why did it always seem to say goodbye?

Joan her name was and at lunchtime  
Solitary solitary  
She would go and watch the pictures  
In the National Gallery  
All alone all alone  
This time with no friend beside her  
She would go and watch the pictures  
All alone.

Will she leave her office colleagues  
Will she leave her evening pleasures  
Toil within a friendly bureau  
Running later in her leisure?  
All alone all alone  
Before the pictures she seems turned to stone.

Close upon the Turner pictures  
Closer than a thought may go  
Hangs her eye and all the colours  
Leap into a special glow  
All for her, all alone  
All for her, all for Joan.

First the canvas where the ocean  
Like a mighty animal  
With a really wicked motion  
Leaps for sailors' funeral

Holds her panting. Oh the creature  
Oh the wicked virile thing  
With its skin of fleck and shadow

Stretching tightening over him.  
Wild yet captured wild yet captured  
By the painter, Joan is quite enraptured.

Now she edges from the canvas  
To another loved more dearly  
Where the awful light of purest  
Sunshine falls across the spray,  
There the burning coasts of fancy  
Open to her pleasure lay.  
All alone, all alone  
Come away, come away  
All alone.

Lady Mary Lady Kitty  
The Honourable Featherstonehaugh  
Polly Tommy from the office  
Which of these shall hold her now?  
Come away, come away  
All alone.

The spray reached out and sucked her in  
It was a hardly noticed thing  
That Joan was there and is not now  
(Oh go and tell young Featherstonehaugh)  
Gone away, gone away  
All alone.

She stood up straight  
The sun fell down  
There was no more of London Town  
She went upon the painted shore  
And there she walks for ever more

Happy quite  
Beaming bright  
In a happy happy light  
All alone.

They say she was a morbid girl, no doubt of it  
And what befell her clearly grew out of it  
But I say she's a lucky one  
To walk for ever in that sun  
And as I bless sweet Turner's name  
I wish that I could do the same.

## THE GHOST OF WARE

I look in the mirror,  
Whose face is there?  
It is the face  
Of the Ghost of Ware.  
This is an old house,  
The river flows below placidly,  
I am enchanted completely  
By this ancient city.  
I will never leave you,  
Dear town of Ware,  
I will look into the mirror  
Another afternoon and there  
I shall see the smiling face  
Of the Ghost of Ware.

## NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING

Nobody heard him, the dead man,  
But still he lay moaning:  
I was much further out than you thought  
And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking  
And now he's dead  
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,  
They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always  
(Still the dead one lay moaning)  
I was much too far out all my life  
And not waving but drowning.



## THE ENGLISH VISITOR

In the graveyard, in the graveyard  
By the tomb of Alan Blair  
On the mighty Scottish mountain  
Knelt the English visitor.

Oh my darling why did you leave me  
To lie so cold where I cannot come,  
I only wished to have you by me  
In the busy town.

How beautiful are the Scottish mountains  
Their backs are like ancient mammoths so quiet  
And I should like to walk on the mountain  
While it is light.

The people frowned to see her looking,  
Alas for Alan that fell in with such a woman  
Why is she here, what has brought her?  
She has no thought for him.

The Englishwoman rose up quickly  
And ran through the gates of the cemetery  
And leapt on the mountain boulders  
With quick step lightly,  
Is that an eagle in the sky wheeling?  
No, it is not wheeling but weaving  
And it's too small for an eagle, it is not hard  
To tell it is a buzzard.

Oh why are the people so hostile, why are they angry?  
They say I come too late  
And that Alan's blood is upon me  
But chiefly it is my walking they hate.

1  
Then the beautiful woman ran up the mountainside  
As over the top she was spinning  
And the people said she would never think of Alan again  
And it was typical of Englishwomen.  
But No, said an angel, you are wrong  
She will think of him freely and frequently  
She is not less sorry than you are  
Only she was brought up differently.

### ‘WHAT IS SHE WRITING? PERHAPS IT WILL BE GOOD’

What is she writing? Perhaps it will be good,  
The young girl laughs: ‘I am in love.’  
But the older girl is serious: ‘Not now, perhaps later.’  
Still the young girl teases: ‘What’s the matter?  
To lose everything! A waste of time!’  
But now the older one is quite silent,  
Writing, writing, and perhaps it will be good.  
Really neither girl is a fool.

### THE FAIRY BELL

*A renegade poet, having taken to journalism for more money, is rebuked by his Muse in the form of an old gentleman; he cuts her throat.*

A dismal bell hung in the belfry  
And clanged a dismal tune  
And back and forth the bats did fly  
Wherever there was room.

He seemed a melancholy but a reasonable creature,  
Yet I could see about his hat as it were this belfry steeple.

The agony through which I go,  
He said, is something that you ought to know  
And something that you will know too  
When I have finished telling you.

He took my hand, I could not choose but stand,  
Perhaps for his own sake he should not have done this?  
Yet I thought Death was the best prize, if he won this.

Oh, the sad music of the backward and forth  
Flying of the bats, pleading for worth,  
But in this perhaps again I was wrong –  
That there was for him some enchantment in their song?

It is done now and I cannot trouble to rue it,  
I took his gullet in my hand and with my knife cut through it.

But still in my head I sometimes hear the soft tune  
Of the belfry bats moaning to find more room  
And the ding-dong of that imaginary sound  
Is as grateful as a fairy bell tolling by waters drowned.

## THE NEW AGE

Shall I tell you the signs of a New Age coming?  
It is a sound of drubbing and sobbing  
Of people crying, We are old, we are old  
And the sun is going down and becoming cold  
Oh sinful and sad and the last of our kind  
If we turn to God now do you think He will mind?

Then they fall on their knees and begin to whine  
That the state of Art itself presages decline  
As if Art has anything or ever had  
To do with civilization whether good or bad.  
Art is wild as a cat and quite separate from civilization  
But that is another matter that is not now under consideration.  
Oh these people are fools with their sighing and sinning  
Why should Man be at an end? he is hardly beginning.  
This New Age will slip in under cover of their cries  
And be upon them before they have opened their eyes.  
Well, say geological time is a one-foot rule  
Then Man's only been here about half an inch to play the fool  
Or be wise if he likes, as he often has been  
Oh heavens how these crying people spoil the beautiful geological  
scene.

## THE BLUE FROM HEAVEN

*A legend of King Arthur of Britain.*

King Arthur rode in another world  
And his twelve knights rode behind him  
And Guinevere was there  
Crying: Arthur, where are you dear?

Why is the King so blue  
Why is he thus blue colour?  
It is because the sun is shining  
And he rides under the blue cornflowers.

High wave the cornflowers  
That shed the pale blue light  
And under the tall cornflowers  
Rides King Arthur and his twelve knights.



And Guinevere is there  
Crying: Arthur, where are you dear?

First there were twelve knights riding  
And then there was only one  
And King Arthur said to the one knight,  
Be gone.

All I wish for now, said Arthur,  
Is the beautiful colour blue  
And to ride in the blue sunshine  
And Guinevere I do not wish for you.

Oh Lord, said Guinevere  
I do not see the colour blue  
And I wish to ride where our knights rode,  
After you.

Go back, go back, Guinevere,  
Go back to the palace, said the King.  
So she went back to the palace  
And her grief did not seem to her a small thing.

The Queen has returned to the palace  
Crying: Arthur, where are you dear?  
And every day she speaks of Arthur's grandeur  
To the knights who are there.

That Arthur has fallen from the grandeur  
Of his powers all agree  
And the falling off of Arthur  
Becomes their theme presently.

As if it were only temporarily  
And it was not for ever  
They speak, but the Queen knows  
He will come back never.

Yes, Arthur has passed away  
Gladly he has laid down his reigning powers  
He has gone to ride in the blue light  
Of the peculiar towering cornflowers.

## THE LADY OF THE WELL-SPRING

*Renoir's 'La Source'.*

He is quite captive to the Lady of the Well-Spring,  
Who will rescue him?  
Into the French drawing-room the afternoon sun shone  
And as the French ladies laughed their white faces  
Barred by the balcony shadows seemed to make grimaces.  
In a far corner of the room  
Sat the English child Joan  
As far away as she could get but without exasperation  
Only to be freed from the difficulty of conversation.  
'Quite captive to the lady of the Well-Spring  
Who will rescue him?'  
Now I have an excuse to go  
Said Joan, and walked out of the window  
Down the iron staircase and along the path  
And then she began to run through the tall wet grass.  
Overhead the hot sun slanting  
Fell on Joan as she ran through the fields panting,  
Faster faster uphill she goes hoping  
That as the ground goes uphill steeply sloping

She will find the well-spring. Into a little wood  
She runs, the branches catching at her feet draw blood  
And there is a sound of piping screaming croaking clacking  
As the birds of the wood rise chattering.  
And now as she runs there is the bicker  
Of a stream growing narrower in a trickle  
And a splash and a flinging, it is water springing.  
Now with her feet in deep moss Joan stands looking  
Where on a bank a great white lady is lying  
A fair smooth lady whose stomach swelling  
Full breasts fine waist and long legs tapering  
Are shadowed with grass-green streaks. The lady smiles  
Lying naked. The sun stealing  
Through the branches, her canopies, glorifies  
The beautiful rich fat lady where she lies.  
Never before in history  
In a place so green and watery  
Has lady's flesh and so divine a lady's as this is  
With just such an admiring look as Joan's met with.  
'Quite captive to the Lady of the Well-Spring'?  
What nonsense, it is a thing  
French ladies would say  
In sophisticated conversation on a warm day.  
I do not wish to rescue him, blurts Joan,  
The lady lolls, Do you wish to go home?  
No, says Joan, I should like to live  
Here Right, says the lady, you are my captive.  
The child Joan fully sees the beauty her eye embraces  
Do not think of her as one who loses.

# THE QUEEN AND THE YOUNG PRINCESS

Mother, mother, let me go  
There are so many things I wish to do.  
My child, the time is not yet ripe  
You are not yet ready for life.  
But what is my life that is to come to be?  
Much the same, child, as it has been for me.  
But Mother you often say you have a headache  
Because of the crown you wear for duty's sake.  
So it is, so it is, a headache I have  
And that is what you must grow up to carry to the grave.  
But in between Mother do you not enjoy the pleasant weather  
And to see the bluebottle and the soft feather?  
Ah my child, that joy you speak of must be a pleasure  
Of human stature, not the measure  
Of animals', who have no glorious duty  
To perform, no headache and so cannot see beauty.  
Up, child, up, embrace the headache and the crown  
Marred pleasure's best, shadow makes the sun strong.

## A DREAM OF COMPARISON

*After reading Book Ten of Paradise Lost.*

Two ladies walked on the soft green grass  
On the bank of a river by the sea  
And one was Mary and the other Eve  
And they talked philosophically.

'Oh to be Nothing,' said Eve, 'oh for a  
Cessation of consciousness  
With no more impressions beating in  
Of various experiences.'

'How can Something envisage Nothing?' said Mary,  
'Where's your philosophy gone?'  
'Storm back through the gates of Birth,' cried Eve,  
'Where were you before you were born?'

Mary laughed: 'I love Life,  
I would fight to the death for it,  
That's a feeling you say? I will find  
A reason for it.'

They walked by the estuary,  
Eve and the Virgin Mary,  
And they talked until nightfall,  
But the difference between them was radical.

## MY HAT



Mother said if I wore this hat  
I should be certain to get off with the right sort of chap  
Well look where I am now, on a desert island

With so far as I can see no one at all on hand  
I know what has happened though I suppose Mother wouldn't see  
This hat being so strong has completely run away with me  
I had the feeling it was beginning to happen the moment I put it on  
What a moment that was as I rose up, I rose up like a flying swan  
As strong as a swan too, why see how far my hat has flown me  
away

It took us a night to come and then a night and a day  
And all the time the swan wing in my hat waved beautifully  
Ah, I thought, How this hat becomes me.  
First the sea was dark but then it was pale blue  
And still the wing beat and we flew and we flew  
A night and a day and a night, and by the old right way  
Between the sun and the moon we flew until morning day.  
It is always early morning here on this peculiar island  
The green grass grows into the sea on the dipping land  
Am I glad I am here? Yes, well, I am,  
It's nice to be rid of Father, Mother and the young man  
There's just one thing causes me a twinge of pain,  
If I take my hat off, shall I find myself home again?  
So in this early morning land I always wear my hat  
Go home, you see, well I wouldn't run a risk like that.

## THE ENGINE DRAIN

### *A Fenland Memory.*

It was the mighty Engine Drain, the Engine Drain, the Engine  
Drain,  
Down which the water went, the water went, the mighty waters  
of the inland sea.  
But still in memory I see, the inland sea, the inland sea  
That did reflect the summer sky, when it was summer time, of  
Cambridgeshire.

The sky was blue, the sea was blue, the inland sea, the inland sea,  
All blue and flat and blue and flat it lay for all to see.

The trees stood up, the reeds stood too, and were reflected in the  
mere

As you might call that inland sea, you might have said it was a  
mere.

And in and out the branches all

The little birds did swoop and swing

Did swoop and swing and call

And oh it was a pretty thing to see them swoop and swing.

Oh ho the inland sea, the inland sea, the mighty mere that moved  
so prettily.

When winter came the water rose,

And rose and rose and rose and rose

And all about the cottage floors

It flowed and rose and flowed and rose

Till in their beds at night you'd see

Quite half afloat the midnight peasantry

That got their living hardily

And died of ripe old age rheumatically,

Oh it was quite surprising how

They'd live to ripe old age rheumatically.

It was because they early learnt

To put their boots on properly

While still in bed, while still in bed.

They learnt to put their boots on properly

Afloat in bed upon the inland sea.

And now I do remember how

Looking from shallow banks below

You'd see the little water-snakes

A-swimming to and fro,

So many little water-snakes

Careering round about

No man might stand to count them there  
Careering in the pretty mere.

Oh it was merry in that day  
To see the water-fowl play  
Upon the inland sea,  
Chip-chopping in the sea;  
Or see them ride the water-race  
In winter, till the winds in chase  
Drove them ashore. Oh ho the wind upon the mere  
It wound the waves in heaps and tossed the spray  
That was half froze, upon the darkening day  
Whipping the waters up till you might see  
A mile away the whitecaps of the inland sea,  
The whitecaps of the mere.

Ah me alas the day is past, is past and long ago  
And no man living now may say he saw the waters flow,  
All all are gone, the Engine Drain  
Has took them to the cruel salt sea  
And what is left behind?  
A fertile flat and farming land,  
A profitable farming land  
Is what is left behind.  
It took some time, as you might guess,  
But not so long as you would guess,  
A day or two, or two or three,  
To take these waters to the sea  
To take them to the Wash.

Why was it called the Engine Drain, the Engine Drain, the Engine  
Drain?

It was because the others were,  
The other drains of Cambridgeshire,  
Controlled by air, by windmills blowing there.



But oh this Engine was a force, a mighty engineering force,  
It took the waters of the mere and brought them to the Wash,  
It took them, did the Engine Drain, these waters of the inland sea,  
And droppt 'em in the cruel salt sea,  
The cruel salt sea.

## SAINT ANTHONY AND THE ROSE OF LIFE

*A Desert Vision.*

A dark rose grew in the desert  
A red and velvety flower  
And opened her petals one by one  
In the midnight hour.

Her leaves were a beautiful bright dark green  
And this might only be seen  
Because the full moon riding high  
Threw a delicate beam.

The rose grew in a sand  
Of a horrible gray yellow  
For the moon that had made the red rose red  
Made the sand sallow.

A strapping life heavy and bright  
Bulged in the rose and her leaves  
And up from the roots of the substantial plant  
The bold drops ran like thieves.

Like burly thieves in a shadowy night  
In a night of profound shades  
They have carried aloft the colours of life  
To flaunt in the deathly glades.

Oh rose oh leaves so much alive,  
What are you doing here,  
And why did you vanish at once away  
In the light of a repentant tear?

## ANGER'S FREEING POWER

I had a dream three walls stood up wherein a raven bird  
Against the walls did beat himself and was not this absurd?

For sun and rain beat in that cell that had its fourth wall free  
And daily blew the summer shower and the rain came presently

And all the pretty summer time and all the winter too  
That foolish bird did beat himself till he was black and blue

Rouse up, rouse up, my raven bird, fly by the open wall  
You make a prison of a place that is not one at all.

I took my raven by the hand, Oh come, I said, my Raven,  
And I will take you by the hand and you shall fly to heaven.

But oh he sobbed and oh he sighed and in a fit he lay  
Until two fellow ravens came and stood outside to say:

You wretched bird, conceited lump  
You well deserve to pine and thump.

See now a wonder, mark it well  
My bird rears up in angry spell,

Oh do I then? he says, and careless flies  
O'er flattened wall at once to heaven's skies.

And in my dream I watched him go  
And I was glad, I loved him so,

Yet when I woke my eyes were wet  
To think Love had not freed my pet

Anger it was that won him hence  
As only Anger taught him sense.

Often my tears fall in a shower  
Because of Anger's freeing power.

## FAFNIR AND THE KNIGHTS

In the quiet waters  
Of the forest pool  
Fafnir the dragon  
His tongue will cool

His tongue will cool  
And his muzzle dip  
Until the soft waters lave  
His muzzle tip

Happy simple creature  
In his coat of mail  
With a mild bright eye  
And a waving tail

Happy the dragon  
In the days expended  
Before the time had come for dragons  
To be hounded

Delivered in their simplicity  
To the Knights of the Advancing Band  
Who seeing the simple dragon  
Must kill him out of hand

The time has not come yet  
But must come soon  
Meanwhile happy Fafnir  
Take thy rest in the afternoon

Take thy rest  
Fafnir while thou mayest  
In the green grass  
Where thou liest

Happy knowing not  
In thy simplicity  
That the knights have come  
To do away with thee.

When thy body shall be torn  
And thy lofty spirit  
Broken into pieces  
For a knight's merit

When thy lifeblood shall be spilt  
And thy Being mild  
In torment and dismay  
To death beguiled

Fafnir, I shall say then,  
Thou art better dead  
For the knights have burnt thy grass  
And thou couldst not have fed.

## SONGE D'ATHALIE

*From Racine.*

It was a dream and shouldn't I bother about a dream?  
But it goes on you know, tears me rather.  
Of course I try to forget it but it will not let me.  
Well it was on an extraordinarily dark night at midnight  
My mother Queen Jezebel appeared suddenly before me  
Looking just as she did the day she died, dressed grandly.  
It was her pride you noticed, nothing she had gone through  
touched that  
And she still had the look of being most carefully made up  
She always made up a lot she didn't want people to know how old  
she was.  
She spoke: Be warned my daughter, true girl to me, she said,  
Do not suppose the cruel God of the Jews has finished with you,  
I am come to weep your falling into his hands, my child.  
With these appalling words my mother,  
This ghost, leant over me stretching out her hands  
And I stretched out my hands too to touch her  
But what was it, oh this is horrible, what did I touch?  
Nothing but the mangled flesh and the breaking bones  
Of a body that the dogs tearing quarrelled over.

## THE HOSTAGE

You hang at dawn, they said,  
You've done nothing wrong but at dawn you will be hung.  
You'll pass tonight in this cell  
With Father Whatshisname. He'll look after you well.

There were two truckle beds in the room, on one sat Father W.,  
Reclining against a bolster. The lady sat on the other.

I should like you to hear my confession, Father, I'm not of your  
persuasion

I'm a member of the Church of England, but on this occasion  
I should like to talk to you, if you'll allow, nothing more,  
Just a talk, not really a confession, but my heart is sore.  
No, it's not that I have to die, that's the trouble, I've always  
wanted to

But it seems so despondent you know, ungracious too,

She sighed. Daughter, proceed,  
Said the Father. I am here at your need.

Even as a child, said the lady, I recall in my pram  
Wishing it was over and done with Oh I am  
Already at fault. Wonderful how 'bright' they keep,  
I'd say of the other children, quite without rancour, then turn  
again to sleep.

Yet life is so beautiful. Oh the scenery.  
Have you ever seen the sun getting up in the greenery  
Of a summer day, in Norfolk say,  
And the mild farm animals lumbering in the thistles.  
Presently the Five-Thirty Milk in the station whistles,  
You can hear the clank of the cans. In the wood  
Trees dip to the stream, the fish rise up for food,  
Snap, the old fly's caught. Et cetera. Oh it's busy,

Life bustles in the country, you know; it should be easy.  
But I was outside of it, looking, finding no place,  
No excuse at all for my distant wandering face.

When I came to London West-Eight, it was *much* the same  
Oh the beautiful faces of others in the falling rain,  
In the buses, no fuss there, no question they weren't at home,  
Oh why should it only be I that was sent to roam?  
I tell you, Father, I trod out the troughs of despair,  
I'd rush out of doors in a fit, hurry, anywhere,  
*Kiss in my mind the darlings, beg them to stop . . .*  
Till the wind came up hard and blew my beauties off.  
The wind blew hard. I snuffed it up and liked it,  
Oh yes I liked it, that was the worst of it.

Of course I never dared form any close acquaintance.  
Marriage? Out of the question. Well for instance  
It might be infectious, this malaise of mine (an excuse?). Spread  
That? I'd rather be dead.

But will the Lord forgive me? Is it wrong?  
Will He forgive me do you think for not minding being hung,  
Being glad it will soon be over,  
Hoping he isn't the Ruler, the busy Lover,  
Wishing to wake again, if I must at all,  
As a vegetable leaning against a quiet wall,  
Or an old stone, so old it was here before Man,  
Or a flash in the fire that split our world from the sun?

I find nothing to instruct me *in this in Holy Writ*,  
Said Father W., only, Remember life not to cling to it.

Well I don't you know, said the lady, then aware of something  
*comical*  
Shot him a look that made him feel uncomfortable

Until he remembered she came from the British Isles,  
Oh, he said, I've heard that's a place where nobody smiles.  
But they do, said the lady, who loved her country, they laugh like  
anything  
There is no one on earth who laughs so much about everything.

Well I see, said the Father, the case is complicated,  
I will pray for you, Daughter, as I pray for all created  
Meanwhile, since you want to die and have to, you may go on  
feeling elated.

## AWAY, MELANCHOLY

Away, melancholy,  
Away with it, let it go.

Are not the trees green,  
The earth as green?  
Does not the wind blow,  
Fire leap and the rivers flow?  
Away melancholy.

The ant is busy  
He carrieth his meat,  
All things hurry  
To be eaten or eat.  
Away, melancholy.

Man, too, hurries,  
Eats, couples, buries,  
He is an animal also  
With a hey ho melancholy,  
Away with it, let it go.



Man of all creatures  
Is superlative  
(Away melancholy)  
He of all creatures alone  
Raiseth a stone  
(Away melancholy)  
Into the stone, the god  
Pours what he knows of good  
Calling, good, God.  
Away melancholy, let it go.

Speak not to me of tears,  
Tyranny, pox, wars,  
Saying, Can God  
Stone of man's thought, be good?

Say rather it is enough  
That the stuffed  
Stone of man's good, growing,  
By man's called God.  
Away, melancholy, let it go.

Man aspires  
To good,  
To love  
Sighs;

Beaten, corrupted, dying  
In his own blood lying  
Yet heaves up an eye above  
Cries, Love, love.  
It is his virtue needs explaining,  
Not his failing.

Away, melancholy,  
Away with it, let it go.

I have lived and followed my fate without flinching, followed it  
gladly  
And now, not wholly unknown, I come to the end.  
I built this famous city, I saw the walls rise,  
As for my abominable brother, I don't think I've been too lenient.  
Was I happy? Yes, at a price, I might have been happier  
If our Dardanian Sailor had condescended to put in elsewhere.  
Now she fell silent, turning her face to the pillow,  
Then getting up quickly, the dagger in her hand,  
I die unavenged, she cried, but I die as I choose,  
Come Death, you know you must come when you're called  
Although you're a god. And this way, and this way, I call you.

## CHILDE ROLANDINE

Dark was the day for Childe Rolandine the artist  
When she went to work as a secretary-typist  
And as she worked she sang this song  
Against oppression and the rule of wrong:

It is the privilege of the rich  
To waste the time of the poor  
To water with tears in secret  
A tree that grows in secret  
That bears fruit in secret  
That ripened falls to the ground in secret  
And manures the parent tree  
Oh the wicked tree of hatred and the secret  
The sap rising and the tears falling.

Likely also, sang the Childe, my soul will fry in hell  
Because of this hatred, while in heaven my employer does well  
And why should he not, exacerbating though he be but generous  
Is it his fault I must work at a work that is tedious?  
Oh heaven sweet heaven keep my thoughts in their night den  
Do not let them by day be spoken.

But then she sang, Ah why not? tell all, speak, speak,  
Silence is vanity, speak for the whole truth's sake.

And rising she took the bugle and put it to her lips, crying:  
There is a Spirit feeds on our tears, I give him mine,  
Mighty human feelings are his food  
Passion and grief and joy his flesh and blood  
That he may live and grow fat we daily die  
This cropping One is our immortality.

Childe Rolandine bowed her head and in the evening  
Drew the picture of the spirit from heaven.

## THE JUNGLE HUSBAND

Dearest Evelyn, I often think of you  
Out with the guns in the jungle stew  
Yesterday I hittapotamus  
I put the measurements down for you but they got lost in the fuss  
It's not a good thing to drink out here  
You know, I've practically given it up dear.  
Tomorrow I am going alone a long way  
Into the jungle. It is all gray  
But green on top  
Only sometimes when a tree has fallen  
The sun comes down plop, it is quite appalling.

You never want to go in a jungle pool  
In the hot sun, it would be the act of a fool  
Because it's always full of anacondas, Evelyn, not looking ill-fed  
I'll say. So no more now, from your loving husband, Wilfred.

## 'COME ON, COME BACK'

*Incident in a future war.*

Left by the ebbing tide of battle  
On the field of Austerlitz  
The girl soldier Vaudevue sits  
Her fingers tap the ground, she is alone  
At midnight in the moonlight she is sitting alone on a round flat  
stone.

Graded by the Memel Conference first  
Of all humane exterminators  
M.L.S.  
Has left her just alive  
Only her memory is dead for evermore.  
She fears and cries, Ah me why am I here?  
Sitting alone on a round flat stone on a hummock there.

Rising, staggering, over the ground she goes  
Over the seeming miles of rutted meadow  
To the margin of a lake  
The sand beneath her feet  
Is cold and damp and firm to the waves' beat.

Quickly – as a child, an idiot, as one without memory –  
She strips her uniform off, strips, stands and plunges  
Into the icy waters of the adorable lake.

On the surface of the water lies  
A ribbon of white moonlight  
The waters on either side of the moony track  
Are black as her mind.  
Her mind is as secret from her  
As the water on which she swims,  
As secret as profound as ominous.

Weeping bitterly for her ominous mind, her plight  
Up the river of white moonlight she swims  
Until a treacherous undercurrent  
Seizing her in an icy-amorous embrace  
Dives with her, swiftly severing  
The waters which close above her head.

An enemy sentinel  
Finding the abandoned clothes  
Waits for the swimmer's return  
(‘Come on, come back’)  
Waiting, whiling away the hour  
Whittling a shepherd's pipe from the hollow reeds.

In the chill light of dawn  
Ring out the pipe's wild notes  
‘Come on, come back.’

Vaudevue  
In the swift and subtle current's close embrace  
Sleeps on, stirs not, hears not the familiar tune  
Favourite of all the troops of all the armies  
Favourite of Vaudevue  
For she had sung it too  
Marching to Austerlitz,  
‘Come on, come back.’

## WHY ARE THE CLERGY . . . ?

Why are the clergy of the Church of England  
Always altering the words of the prayers in the Prayer Book?  
Cranmer's touch was surer than theirs, do they not respect him?  
For instance last night in church I heard  
(I italicize the interpolation)  
'The Lord bless you and keep you *and all who are dear unto you*'  
As the blessing is a congregational blessing and meant to be  
This is questionable on theological grounds  
But is it not offensive to the ear and also ludicrous?  
That 'unto' is a particularly ripe piece of idiocy  
Oh how offensive it is. I suppose we shall have next  
'Lighten our darkness we beseech thee oh Lord *and the darkness of*  
*all who are dear unto us.*'  
It seems a pity. Does Charity object to the objection?  
Then I cry, and not for the first time to that smooth face  
Charity, have pity.

## I REMEMBER

It was my bridal night I remember,  
An old man of seventy-three  
I lay with my young bride in my arms,  
A girl with t.b.  
It was wartime, and overhead  
The Germans were making a particularly heavy raid on  
Hampstead.  
What rendered the confusion worse, perversely  
Our bombers had chosen that moment to set out for Germany.  
Harry, do they ever collide?  
I do not think it has ever happened,  
Oh my bride, my bride.

## BUT MURDEROUS

A mother slew her unborn babe  
In a day of recent date  
Because she did not wish him to be born in a world  
Of murder and war and hate  
'Oh why should I bear a babe from my womb  
To be broke in pieces by the hydrogen bomb?'

I say this woman deserves little pity  
That she was a fool and a murderess  
Is a child's destiny to be contained by a mind  
That signals only a lady in distress?

And why should human infancy be so superior  
As to be too good to be born in this world?  
Did she think it was an angel or a baa-lamb  
That lay in her belly furled?

Oh the child is the young of its species  
Alike with that noble, vile, curious and fierce  
How foolish this poor mother to suppose  
Her act told us aught that was not murderous

(As, item, That the arrogance of a half-baked mind  
Breeds murder; makes us all unkind.)

## THIS IS DISGRACEFUL AND ABOMINABLE

Of all the disgraceful and abominable things  
Making animals perform for the amusement of human beings is  
Utterly disgraceful and abominable.

Animals are animals and have their nature  
And that's enough, it is enough, leave it alone.

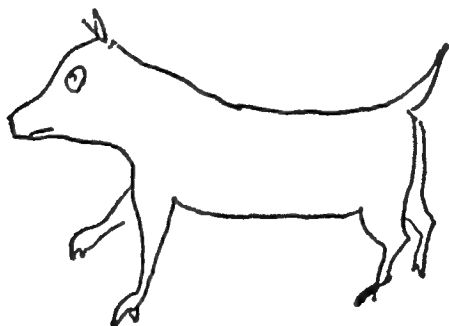
A disgraceful and abominable thing I saw in a French circus  
A performing dog  
Raised his back leg when he did not need to  
He did not wish to relieve himself, he was made to raise his leg.  
The people sniggered Oh how disgraceful and abominable.  
Weep for the disgrace, forbid the abomination.

The animals are cruelly trained,  
How could patience do it, it would take too long, they are cruelly  
trained.

Lions leap through fire, it is offensive,  
Elephants dance, it is offensive  
That the dignified elephant should dance for fear of hot plates,  
The lion leap or be punished.  
And how can the animals be quartered or carted except cheaply?  
Profit lays on the whip of punishment, money heats the prodding  
iron,

Cramps cages. Oh away with it, away with it, it is so disgraceful  
and abominable.

Weep the disgraces. Forbid the abominations.





## GOD THE EATER

There is a god in whom I do not believe  
Yet to this god my love stretches,  
This god whom I do not believe in is  
My whole life, my life and I am his.

Everything that I have of pleasure and pain  
(Of pain, of bitter pain and men's contempt)  
I give this god for him to feed upon  
As he is my whole life and I am his.

When I am dead I hope that he will eat  
Everything I have been and have not been  
And crunch and feed upon it and grow fat  
Eating my life all up as it is his.

## GOD THE DRINKER

*Porque Fue Sensible.*

I like to see him drink the gash  
I made with my own knife  
And draw the blood out of my wrist  
And drink my life.

Who is this One who drinks so deep?  
His name is Death, He drinks asleep.

(She has taken the sweet knife far away,  
The knife bleeds by night and day,  
Night and day the blade drips,  
I put the sweet knife to my lips.)

It was a god, he drank my health,  
He came in shadows and by stealth.

## WILL MAN EVER FACE FACT AND NOT FEEL FLAT?

The rocks and trees in silence stood  
To see where Man ran by,  
A creature weak as this one is  
What can he do but die?  
But as they stood and scornful smiled  
They heard an angel call:  
'The tender creature needeth love,  
He needeth love above all.'

This made the rocks and trees laugh more  
Until they saw the force of it,  
Saw Man disembowelling the earth  
And killing because of it.

Ah then they found Man admirable  
'But', said the angel, 'is he?'  
And weeping cried, 'The need of love  
Makes Man too busy.'

Then God said, 'You are wrong all,  
The need of love is meant to call  
Man to me, I am love, I,  
*If it does not, for lack of love he'll die.'*

But then came a little wind sneaking along  
That was older than all and infamously strong,  
'Oh what an artistic animal is our little Man,'  
Sneered the wind, 'It is wonderful how he can  
Invent fairy stories about everything, pit pat,  
Will he ever face fact and not feel flat?'

## EVERY LOVELY LIMB'S A DESOLATION

I feel a mortal isolation  
Wrap each lovely limb in desolation,  
Sight, hearing, all  
Suffer a fall.

I see the pretty fields and streams, I hear  
Beasts calling and birds singing, oh not clear  
But as a prisoner  
Who in a train doth pass  
And through the glass  
Peer;  
Ah me, so far away is joy, so near.

Break, break the glass, you say?  
These thoughts are but a mood  
Blow them away, go free?  
They are my whole soul's food.

Ghost's food ! Sepulchral aliment !  
Thou sleekest in me Death's tegument  
And so art bent  
To do, and this I know.

Yet there are days, oh brief,  
When thought's caught half-asleep  
(Most merrily) and drowsing  
Set in a meadow browsing.

Ah then, like summer breeze in lovely trees  
That comes in little pants unequally,  
Or like the little waves of summer seas  
That push and fuss  
In heaven knows what sort of busyness,

Idly, idly, my thoughts bring me to sleep,  
On sunny summer day, to sleep. In sun  
I fall asleep.

But I must wake and wake again in pain  
Crying – to see where sun was once all dust and stain  
As on a window pane –

All, all is isolation  
And every lovely limb's a desolation.

## A DREAM OF NOURISHMENT

I had a dream of nourishment  
Against a breast  
My infant face was preste  
Ah me the *suffisance* I drew therefrom  
What strength, what glory from that fattening fluid,  
The fattening most  
Was to my infant taste  
For oh the sun of strength beat in my veins  
And swelled me full, I lay in brightest sun  
All ready to put forth, all bursting, all delight.

But in my dream the breast withdrew  
In darkness I lay then  
And thin,  
Thin as a sheeted ghost  
And I was famished,  
Hankered for a dish  
I thought, of blood, as in some classicist's  
Old tale  
To give me hue and substance, make me hale.

Oh breast, oh Best  
That I held fast  
Oh fattening draught  
Timely repast  
Quaffed, presst  
And lost.

The breast was withdrawn violently  
And oh the famishment for me.

## THE AIRY CHRIST

*After reading Dr Rieu's translation of St Mark's Gospel.*

Who is this that comes in splendour, coming from the blazing  
East?

This is he we had not thought of, this is he the airy Christ.

Airy, in an airy manner in an airy parkland walking,  
Others take him by the hand, lead him, do the talking.

But the Form, the airy One, frowns an airy frown,  
What they say he knows must be, but he looks aloofly down,

Looks aloofly at his feet, looks aloofly at his hands,  
Knows they must, as prophets say, nailed be to wooden bands.

As he knows the words he sings, that he sings so happily  
Must be changed to working laws, yet sings he ceaselessly.

Those who truly hear the voice, the words, the happy song,  
Never shall need working laws to keep from doing wrong.

Deaf men will pretend sometimes they hear the song, the words,  
And make excuse to sin extremely; this will be absurd.

Heed it not, Whatever foolish men may do the song is cried  
For those who hear, and the sweet singer does not care that he was  
crucified.

For he does not wish that men should love him more than  
anything  
Because he died; he only wishes they would hear him sing.

## IT FILLED MY HEART WITH LOVE

*When I hold in my hand a soft and crushable animal, and feel the  
fur beat for fear and the soft feather, I cannot feel unhappy.*

In his fur the animal rode, and in his fur he strove,  
And oh it filled my heart my heart, it filled my heart with love.

## I. AN AGNOSTIC

*(of his religious friend)*

He often gazes on the air  
And sees quite plain what is not there  
Peopling the wholesome void with horrid shapes  
Which he manoeuvres in religious japes.  
And yet he is more gracious than I,  
He has such a gracious personality.

## II. A RELIGIOUS MAN

*(of his agnostic friend)*

He says that religious thought and all our nerviness  
Is because of the great shock it was for all of us  
Long, long ago when animal turned human being  
Which is more than enough to account for everything . . .  
And yet he is more gracious than I,  
He has such a gracious personality.

## DEAR LITTLE SIRMIO

*Catullus recollected.*



Dear little Sirmio  
Of all capes and islands  
Wherever Neptune rides the coastal waters and the open sea  
You really are the nicest.

How glad I am to see you again, how fondly I look at you.

No sooner had I left Bithynia – and what was the name of the  
other place?  
And was safely at sea  
I thought only of seeing you.

Really is anything nicer  
After working hard and being thoroughly worried  
Than to leave it all behind and set out for home  
Dear old home and one's own comfortable bed?

Even if one wears oneself out paying for them.

## 'GREAT UNAFFECTED VAMPIRES AND THE MOON'

It was a graveyard scene. The crescent moon  
Performed a devil's purpose for she shewed  
The earth a-heap where smooth it should have lain;  
And in and out the tombs great witches' cats  
Played tig-a-tag and sang harmoniously.  
Beneath the deathly slopes the palings stood  
Catching the moonlight on their painted sides,  
Beyond, the waters of a mighty lake  
Stretching five furlongs at its fullest length  
Lay as a looking-glass, framed in a growth  
Of leafless willows; all its middle part  
Was open to the sky, and there I saw  
Embosomed in the lake together lie  
Great unaffected vampires and the moon.  
A Christian crescent never would have lent  
Unchristian monsters such close company  
And so I say she was no heavenly light  
But devil's in that business manifest  
And as the vampires seemed quite unaware  
I thought she'd lost her soul for nothing lying there.



## THE CELTS

I think of the Celts as rather a whining lady  
Who was beautiful once but is not so much so now  
She is not very loving, but there is one thing she loves  
It is her grievance which she hugs and takes out walking.

The Celtic lady likes fighting very much for freedom  
But when she has got it she is a proper tyrant  
Nobody likes her much when she is governing.

The Celtic lady is not very widely popular  
But the English love her oh they love her very much  
Especially when the Celtic lady is Irish they love her  
Which is odd as she hates them then more than anyone else.  
When she's Welsh the English stupidly associate her chiefly  
With national hats, eisteddfods and Old Age Pensions.  
(They don't think of her at all when she is Scotch, it is rather a  
problem.)

Oh the Celtic lady when she's Irish is the one for me  
Oh she is so witty and wild, my word witty,  
And flashing and spiteful this Celtic lady we love  
All the same she is not so beautiful as she was.

## THE PASSING CLOUD

*From The Royal Bethlehem Hospital.*

I thought as I lay on my bed one night, I am only a passing cloud  
And I wiped the tear from my sorrowful eye and merrily cried  
aloud

Oh the love of the Lord is a fearful thing and the love of the Lord  
is mine

And what do I care for the sins of men and the tears of our guilty  
time

I will sail my cloud in the bright blue sky, in the bright blue sky I  
sail

And I look at the sea so merrily swung in the path of the Arctic  
whale

On the tropic belt of the uttermost wild the sea rings a merry peal  
And the fish leaps up and the sharks pursue in Creation's happy reel  
Oh I dance on my cloud and I cry aloud to the careless creative  
gust

That made us all and made the fish and the ocean that holds them  
fast

Hurrah hurrah for the grand old heavenly gusty creator Lord  
Who said to Job, Don't bother me son, I'll do as I please my word.  
Oh never was happiness like to mine as I pelt along on my cloud  
In the sky-blue path of the high winds' breath, no wonder I cry  
aloud

With joy I cried and my cheeks were wet and the air was a singing  
space

And I thought as we shot to the upper reach, My lord, it's a lick of  
a pace.

When we swept out of sight of the troublesome earth, was I afraid,  
oh no,

I was glad to see the parochial thing pack up its traps and go  
And now I go round and round I go in the merry abyss of the sky  
Piercing the grand primaeval dust of the stars in their infancy

I tunnel, I burrow, I offer my dust as a dust for creation's choice  
And in the ding-dong of the universe I pipe my innocent voice  
I pipe my innocent voice I pipe, I pipe and I also sing  
Till I'd sung too loud and woke myself up and that is another  
thing,

Oh I woke with a bump and they brought me here to

Bethlehem's Royal precincts

And do I care? Not I, not I, I have shed all careful instincts,

I will laugh and sing, or be dumb if they please, and await at the  
Lord's discretion

The day I'll be one, as one I'll be, in an infinite regression

One, ha ha, with a merry ha ha, skip the fish and amoeba where  
are we now?

We are very far out, in a rarified place, with the thin thin dust in a  
giddy chase,

The dust of Continuous Creation, and how is that for  
identification?

You'll like it; you must, you know,

That merry dust does jig so.

## LOIN DE L'ÊTRE

You don't look at all well, quite loin de l'être in fact

Poor pale-face what's the matter, don't they know?

Oh they don't know, but still I don't feel well

Nor ever shall, my name is *Loin de l'Être*.

They stood on the empty terrace above the precipice

When this conversation took place

Between the affectionate but exasperated friend

And the invalid. It is not possible to be

Ill and merry, poor *Loin de l'Être* sighed

And forced a smile, but oh she was so tired.

So tired, called Echo, so tired.

Now pull yourself together, cried the friend  
Together cried Echo,  
I must leave you now for a tick, she said  
Mind you don't get edgy looking at the precipice.  
The lovely invalid sighed, *Loin de l'être*,  
And Echo taking the form of a handsome young man  
Cried, *Loin de l'Être* and took her away with him.

## MY CAT MAJOR

Major is a fine cat  
What is he at?  
He hunts birds in the hydrangea  
And in the tree  
Major was ever a ranger  
He ranges where no one can see.

Sometimes he goes up to the attic  
With a hooped back  
His paws hit the iron rungs  
Of the ladder in a quick kick  
How can this be done?  
It is a knack.

Oh Major is a fine cat  
He walks cleverly  
And what is he at, my fine cat?  
No one can see.

## PARENTS

Parents who barely can afford it  
Should not send their children to public schools ill will reward it  
That skimping and saving and giving up  
That seems so unselfish will buy you a pup  
Oh what an ugly biting bow-wow  
Well Colonel, how does it go now?  
Your son aged twenty-two wears a glittering blazer  
His conversation about ponds and ducks, oh happy fool,  
Is interrupted to speak of his school  
As if at fault he'd allowed  
Momentarily that pond to draw him from being proud.  
Ah, so hardly won through to it, Colonel,  
Is to attach too much importance to it.  
But he's saved, ponds, duck, fish in dark water  
Have a tight hold of him It is your daughter  
Colonel, who is wholly corrupted.  
Women when they are snobbish do not loaf  
Look at fish, are not oafish  
But are persistently mercenary, cold, scheming and calculating,  
This in a young girl is revolting.  
Oh beautiful brave mother, the wife of the colonel,  
How could you allow your young daughter to become aware of  
the scheming?  
If you had not, it might have stayed a mere dreaming  
Of palaces and princes, girlish at worst.  
Oh to become sensible about social advance at seventeen is to be  
lost.

## TO A LADY IN A TRAIN

She is not Indian, she's ill  
'Tis Death hath darkened that pale cheek of hers,  
No sun of Indian summer in a trench  
Of climate tropical hath made her brown  
That was so pale and fair, a northern girl.

Now look more close. That colour's gray not brown  
Death certainly hath hold of her, his fingers  
Stop up the blood to blacken where it lingers  
Death hath her now till gray to black shall turn.

Ah then her soul now ruffling up befeathered  
In practice for the flight when Death hath done  
Flying shall mock all those who stay at home  
And cry: Begone,  
Cast off from fleshy station,  
Death untethered,  
To heaven flown.

Seeing her now this day so soon to go  
I would go too  
And I say true,

If being Indian not ill had put it on  
I should not so much envy her complexion.

## ADELAIDE ABNER

Adelaide Abner is cruel  
She is grown into a cruel beast  
She does not ask me to her parties now  
She wants to be first at the feast.

But oh the parties were so beautiful  
And I did not monopolize the fices  
I was only happy to be delivered for a time  
From silence.

Silence at depth is cold  
It is misty and full of pain  
And because of Adelaide Abner's cruelty  
I am in silence again.

Then the girl knelt down and repented  
Of what she had said about Adelaide,  
Was I a true friend? she wondered,  
Yes, I was a true friend, she said.

I was looking for a venial motive,  
Vanity might change like the weather,  
But oh her heart is cold  
And so it is goodbye for ever.

## THE ENGLISH

Many of the English,  
The intelligent English,  
Of the Arts, the Professions and the Upper Middle Classes,  
Are under-cover men,  
But what is under the cover  
(That was original)  
Died; now they are corpse-carriers.  
It is not noticeable, but be careful,  
They are infective.

## KING HAMLET'S GHOST

*'It would be spoke to.'*

Poor noble Ghost that comes from place of pain  
Of so much pain and foul and fiery,  
To tread again in mournful armour clad  
Thy soft gray fields upon a winter's night  
Thou wouldst be spoke to, for unless one speaks  
Thou canst not; *must* be spoke to then or go  
Unheard, uncomforted to Misery.  
I pity thy royal brow, thy temper too,  
Thy crownèd brow and the sharp savagery  
That, when thy son had spoke, found out in words  
A long expression of revengefulness,  
'Kill, kill the murderers.' All those who go  
In midnight fields of melancholy thought  
Where friends pass distantly and do not speak  
May cry 'Kill, kill' for they are murdered too  
As set upon by Silence and quite killed.  
'Speak, speak to me' they cry, 'I would be spoke to'  
But oh the friends speak not, they have too much to do.

## AT SCHOOL

*A Paolo and Francesca situation but more hopeful, say in Purgatory.*

At school I always walk with Elwyn  
Walk with Elwyn all the day  
Oh my darling darling Elwyn  
We shall never go away.



This school is a most curious place  
Everything happens faintly  
And the other boys and girls who are here  
We cannot see distinctly.

All the day I walk with Elwyn  
And sometimes we also ride  
Both of us would really always  
Rather be outside.

Most I like to ride with Elwyn  
In the early morning sky  
Under the solitary mosses  
That hang from the trees awry.

*The wind blows cold then  
And the wind comes to the dawn  
And we ride silently  
And kiss as we ride down.*

Oh my darling darling Elwyn  
Oh what a sloppy love is ours  
Oh how this sloppy love sustains me  
When we come back to the school bars.

There are bars round this school  
And inside the lights are always burning bright  
And yet there are shadows  
That belong rather to the night than to the light.

Oh my darling darling Elwyn  
Why is there this dusty heat in this closed school?  
All the radiators must be turned full on  
Surely that is against the rules?

Hold my hand as we run down the long corridors  
Arched over with tombs  
We are underground now a long way  
Look out, we are getting close to the boiler room.

We are not driven harshly to the lessons you know  
That go on under the electric lights  
That go on persistently, patiently you might say,  
They do not mind if we are not very bright.

Open this door quick, Elwyn, it is break-time  
And if we ride quickly we can come to the sea-pool  
And swim; will not that be a nice thing to do?  
Oh my darling do not look so sorrowful.

Oh why do we cry so much  
Why do we not go to some place that is nice?  
Why do we only stand close  
And lick the tears from each other's eyes?

Darling, my darling  
You are with me in the school and in the dead trees' glade  
If you were not with me  
I should be afraid.

*Fear not the ragged dawn skies  
Fear not the heat of the boiler room  
Fear not the sky where it flies  
The jagged clouds in their rusty colour.*

Do not tell me not to cry my love  
The tears run down your face too  
There is still half an hour left  
Can we not think of something to do?

There goes the beastly bell  
Tolling us to lessons  
If I do not like this place much  
That bell is the chief reason.

Oh darling Elwyn love  
Our tears fall down together  
*It is because of the place we're in*  
*And because of the weather.*

## CAN IT BE?

Can it be, can it be  
That beasts are of various bravery,  
Some brave by nature, some not at all,  
Some trying to be against a fall?

I saw a cat. Beside a lily tank,  
Paved level with the grass, she stood, this cat,  
Considering her leap.  
Three times she backed for jumping, gathered tight  
(So tight, thought landed her already over)  
And did not jump. And then,  
After a pause, as scolding humanly  
'Not nervy, eh? We'll see.'  
She jumped. And what a jump that was!  
Quite twice as long  
And high  
As it need be,  
Now why  
Did this cat jump at all, so force herself?  
There was a path around the tank,  
She could have walked.

Can it be, can it be  
That beasts are of various bravery,  
Some simply brave, some not, some taking thought  
(Most curiously) to cast themselves aloft?

## THE OLD SWEET DOVE OF WIVETON

'Twas the voice of the sweet dove  
I heard him move  
I heard him cry  
Love, love.

High in the chestnut tree  
Is the nest of the old dove  
And there he sits solitary  
Crying, Love, love.

The gray of this heavy day  
Makes the green of the trees' leaves and the grass brighter  
And the flowers of the chestnut tree whiter  
And whiter the flowers of the high cow-parsley.

So still is the air  
So heavy the sky  
You can hear the splash  
Of the water falling from the green grass  
As Red and Honey push by,  
The old dogs,  
Gone away, gone hunting by the marsh bogs.

Happy the retriever dogs in their pursuit  
Happy in bog-mud the busy foot.

Now all is silent, it is silent again  
In the sombre day and the beginning soft rain  
It is a silence made more actual  
By the moan from the high tree that is occasional,

Where in his nest above  
Still sits the old dove,  
Murmuring solitary  
Crying for pain,  
Crying most melancholy  
Again and again.

## THE PAST

People who are always praising the past  
And especially the times of faith as best  
Ought to go and live in the Middle Ages  
And be burnt at the stake as witches and sages.

## THE SINGING CAT

It was a little captive cat  
Upon a crowded train  
His mistress takes him from his box  
To ease his fretful pain.

She holds him tight upon her knee  
The graceful animal  
And all the people look at him  
He is so beautiful.

But oh he pricks and oh he prods  
And turns upon her knee  
Then lifteth up his innocent voice  
In plaintive melody.

He lifteth up his innocent voice  
He lifteth up, he singeth  
And to each human countenance  
A smile of grace he bringeth.

He lifteth up his innocent paw  
Upon her breast he clingeth  
And everybody cries, Behold  
The cat, the cat that singeth.

He lifteth up his innocent voice  
He lifteth up, he singeth  
And all the people warm themselves  
In the love his beauty bringeth.

## LONGING FOR DEATH BECAUSE OF FEEBLENESS

Oh would that I were a reliable spirit careering around  
Congenially employed and no longer by *feebleness* bound  
Oh who would not leave the flesh to become a reliable spirit  
Possibly travelling far and acquiring merit.

## MY HEART GOES OUT

My heart goes out to my Creator in love  
Who gave me Death, as end and remedy.  
All living creatures come to quiet Death  
For him to eat up their activity  
And give them nothing, which is what they want although  
When they are living they do not think so.

### LOOK!

I am becalmed in a deep sea  
And give signals, but they are not answered  
And yet I see ships in the distance  
And give signals, but they do not answer.

Am I a pariah ship, or a leper  
To be shunned reasonably?  
Or did I commit a crime long ago  
And have forgotten, but they remember?

Into the dark night to darker I move  
And the lights of the ships are not seen now  
But instead there is a phosphorescence from the water.  
That light shines, and now I see

Low down, as I bend my hand in the water  
A fish so transparent in his inner organs  
That I know he comes from the earthquake bed  
Five miles below where I sail, I sail.

All his viscera are transparent, his eyes globule on stalks,  
Is he dead? Or alive and only languid? Now  
Into my hand he comes, the travelling creature,

Not from the sea-bed only but from the generations,  
Faint because of the lighter pressure,  
Fainting, a long fish, stretched out.

So we meet, and for a moment  
I forget my solitariness  
But then I should like to show him,  
And who shall I show him to?

## WHO IS THIS WHO HOWLS AND MUTTERS?

Who is this that howls and mutters?  
It is the Muse, each word she utters  
Is thrown against a shuttered door  
And very soon she'll speak no more.

Cry louder, Muse, make much more noise  
The world is full of rattling toys  
I thought she'd say, Why should I then?  
I have spoke low to better men  
But oh she did not speak at all but went away  
And now I search for her by night and day.

Night and day I seek my Muse  
Seek the one I did abuse  
She had so sweet a face, so sweet a voice  
But oh she did not make sufficient noise.

False plea. I did not listen then  
That listen now and listen now in vain.



And still the tale of talent murdered  
Untimely and untimely buried  
Works in my soul. Forgive me, Lord, I cry  
Who only makest Muses howl and sigh  
Thou, Lord, repent and give her back to me  
Weeping uncomforted, Lord have pity.

He did repent. I have her now again  
Howling much worse, and oh the door is open.

## MAGNA EST VERITAS

With my looks I am bound to look simple or fast I would rather  
look simple  
So I wear a tall hat on the back of my head that is rather a temple  
And I walk rather queerly and comb my long hair  
And people say, Don't bother about her.  
So in my time I have picked up a good many facts,  
Rather more than the people do who wear smart hats  
And I do not deceive because I am rather simple too  
And although I collect facts I do not always know what they  
amount to.  
I regard them as a contribution to almighty Truth, magna est  
veritas et praevalerebit,  
Agreeing with that Latin writer, Great is Truth and will prevail in  
a bit.

## THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Put out that Light,  
Put out that bright Light,  
Let darkness fall.

Put out that Day,  
It is the time for nightfall.

## IN THE PARK

Walking one day in the park in winter  
I heard two silvered gentlemen talking,  
Two old friends, elderly, walking, talking  
There by the silver lake mid-pooled black in winter.

'Pray for the Mute who have no word to say,'  
Cried the one old gentleman, 'Not because they are dumb,  
But they are weak. And the weak thoughts beating in the brain  
Generate a sort of heat, yet cannot speak.  
Thoughts that are bound without sound  
In the tomb of the brain's room, wound. Pray for the Mute.'

'But' (said his friend), 'see how they swim  
Free in the element best loved, so wet; yet breathe  
As a visitor to the air come; plunge then, rejoicing more,  
Having left it briefly for the visited shore, to come  
Home to the wet  
Windings that are yet  
Best loved though familiar; and oh so right the wet  
Stream and the wave, he is their pet.'

Finished, the mild friend  
Smiled, put aside his well-tuned hearing instrument  
And it seemed  
The happiness he spoke of  
Irradiated all his members, and his heart  
Barked with delight to stress  
So much another's happiness.

But which other's? The sombre first  
Speaker reversed  
The happy moment; cried again  
(Mousing for pain) 'Pray for the Mute' (a tear drops)  
'They are like the brute.'

Struck by the shout  
That he may not know what it's about  
The deaf friend again  
Up-ends his hearing instrument to relieve the strain.  
What? Oh shock, ' "Pray for the Mute" '?  
I thought you said the newt.'

Now which is Christianer pray, of these old friends, the one  
who will say  
For pain's sake pray, pray; or the deaf other that rejoices  
So much that the cool amphibian  
Shall have his happiness, all things rejoicing with him?

But wait; the first speaker now, the old sombre one,  
Is penetrated quite by his friend's sun  
And, 'Oh blessed you,' he cries, 'to show  
So in simplicity what is true.'  
All his face is suffused with happy tears and as he weeps he sings  
a happy song,  
Happier even than his friend's song was, righting the wrong.  
So two, better than one, finally strike truth in his happy song:

'Praise,' cries the weeping softened one, 'Not pray, praise,  
all men,  
Praise is the best prayer, the least self's there, that least's  
release.'

## EVANGELIE

or

### THE FIGURE OF LITERARY CORRUPTION, SEEKING GLORY NOT TRUTH

Wicked and corrupt  
Was Evangelie  
And the corruption came out of her  
On to me.

Corruptest and most wicked  
Of creatures,  
Can I forget a word she said  
Or her features?

Lord, cleanse me of the corruption  
Of Evangelie,  
And of my feelings for her,  
That I may wear again the garment of whiteness,  
And the fair crown in my hair.

## JUMBO

Jumbo, Jumbo, Jumbo darling, Jumbo come to Mother.  
But Jumbo wouldn't, he was a dog who simply wouldn't bother  
An ugly beast he was with drooping guts and filthy skin,  
It was quite wonderful how 'mother' loved the ugly thing.

## THE CHOOSERS

Who shall we send to fetch him away  
This young-man Author of the Month of May?  
We will send Mr Puff to fetch him away,  
We are the Choosers and stand in the way.

Oh we are the Choosers, what we say goes.  
Does Puff know this? Yes, Puff knows.  
Hey ho what a merry game,  
It is as if we were still in Pop, it is the same.

With a hey-ho and a yah  
No, we will not have So-and-So  
Because we do not like his hat or his Ma.

Outside of this eclectic and up-to-date circle  
Slink the sleek Great Ones, and you know  
They may go and not care a particle  
Because the Angel of Posterity has chosen them  
And the Choosers will not be known then,  
All the same it is a shame to treat them so.

Let Posterity-Time come  
Quick and Choosers be dumb.

Oh why does England cherish her arts in this wise,  
Picking inferiorly with grafted eyes?  
It is because it is like the school they never forget,  
So-and-so must be the driven out one, thus the pet.

## THE OCCASIONAL YARROW

It was a mile of greenest grass  
Whereon a little stream did pass,  
The Occasional Yarrow

Only in every seventh year  
Did this pretty stream appear,  
The Occasional Yarrow

Wading and warbling in its beds  
Of grass decked out with daisy heads,  
The Occasional Yarrow

There in my seventh year, and this sweet stream's,  
I wandered happily (as happy gleams  
The Occasional Yarrow).

Though now to memory alone  
I can call up thy lovely form,  
Occasional Yarrow

I still do bless thy Seventh days  
Bless thy sweet name and all who praise  
The Occasional Yarrow.

## THE SORROWFUL GIRL

Muriel, Muriel, marry me Muriel,  
And I will comfort you as well  
And bring life to your pale hair  
And your languid air.

Ah then I shall not be I, for I am here  
With my languid air and lifeless hair  
And I do not feel cold or heat  
I am imprisoned and do not need to be freed  
My prison is my sorrowful mind  
And I do not wish to leave it behind  
Wake me not, leave me here, leave me alone  
I am as God made me, a sorrowful one.

And singing she sang, I am sorrowful, sorrowful  
And because I am sorrowful I am beautiful.

Her lover has left her and gone angrily off  
He speaks of her only to laugh and to scoff  
Pretending he only wanted to marry her for her money  
Intending to prove his thoughts were not moony  
With love, or any such stuff,  
That he is not such a fool as to have had a rebuff.

A pale light-moon-white lily romantic girl-of-a-lover  
With nothing to her name but two thousand pounds in Old  
Consols, who will have her?  
Is the burden of the anger of this churl and of his troubles.

But ever there came from far away  
Growing fainter with the passing day  
The sorrowful song on the sorrowful air  
Of the languid girl with the lifeless hair  
Singing: Oh I am sorrowful, sorrowful, sorrowful  
And because I am sorrowful I am beautiful.

## THE STARLING

I will never leave you darling  
To be eaten by the starling  
For I love you more than ever  
In the wet and stormy weather.

Thus to the husband sang the wife  
That loved him more than his own life  
Oh at these words the husband felt  
Each hair rise separate upon his icy pelt.

He let himself down from out his room  
He went upon the ancient mountain  
And there he quite forgot his gloom  
As he trod the torrent's icy fountain.

Cold, cold, icy cold,  
Cold, cold, cold I am,  
Cold has no place in my wife's warm thought  
There she will have me cradled and wraught.  
Oh nothing, nothing, nothing I  
He cried, that in her thinking does not lie.

Then he doffed his clothes and quickly froze  
In the ice of the ancient mountain-side  
And there in an icy happy doze  
He doth for evermore abide.

Down in the valley waits the wife  
That loved him more than his own life  
And still she sings, in hope to lure  
Him to her side again, Be very sure



I will never leave you darling  
To be eaten by the starling  
For I love you more than ever  
In the wet and stormy weather.

## DIE LORELEI

An antique story comes to me  
And fills me with anxiety,  
I wonder why I fear so much  
What surely has no modern touch?

It is of Germany it speaks,  
One evening time; the mountain peaks  
Are in the sun, but the old Rhine  
Flows secretly and does not shine.

There, on a rock majestical,  
A girl with smile equivocal,  
Painted, young and damned and fair,  
Sits and combs her yellow hair.

With a yellow comb she combs it,  
Sings a song, and sometimes moans it,  
That has a most peculiar turn,  
It makes the heart and belly burn.

The sailor sailing, hearing it  
Falls at once into a fit,  
He does not see the rocky race,  
His eyes are looking for a face.

The boat strikes hard, as she must do,  
And down she goes, and he goes too.  
This story brings me so much grief  
I know not how to find relief.

Lurks there some meaning underneath?

## FAREWELL

Farewell dear friends  
I loved you so much  
But now I must leave you  
And spread over me the dust

Fair life fare well  
Fare never ill  
Far I go now  
And say, Farewell.

Farewell dear world  
With the waters around you curled  
And the grass on your breast  
I loved you best.

Farewell fish and insect  
Bird, animal, swift mover  
Grim reptile as well  
I was your approver.

Wide sky, farewell,  
Sun, moon, stars in places  
Farewell all fair universes  
In far places.

Ding dong, ding dong  
As a bell is rung,  
Sing ding dong farewell  
As a sweet bell.



## THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PERSON FROM PORLOCK

Coleridge received the Person from Porlock  
And ever after called him a curse,  
Then why did he hurry to let him in?  
He could have hid in the house.

It was not right of Coleridge in fact it was wrong  
(But often we all do wrong)  
As the truth is I think he was already stuck  
With Kubla Khan.

He was weeping and wailing: I am finished, finished,  
I shall never write another word of it,  
When along comes the Person from Porlock  
And takes the blame for it.

It was not right, it was wrong,  
But often we all do wrong.

★

May we inquire the name of the Person from Porlock?  
Why, Porson, didn't you know?  
He lived at the bottom of Porlock Hill  
So had a long way to go,

He wasn't much in the social sense  
Though his grandmother was a Warlock,  
One of the Rutlandshire ones I fancy  
And nothing to do with Porlock,

And he lived at the bottom of the hill as I said  
And had a cat named Flo,  
And had a cat named Flo.

I long for the Person from Porlock  
To bring my thoughts to an end,  
I am becoming impatient to see him  
I think of him as a friend,

Often I look out of the window  
Often I run to the gate  
I think, He will come this evening,  
I think it is rather late.

I am hungry to be interrupted  
For ever and ever amen  
O Person from Porlock come quickly  
And bring my thoughts to an end.

★

I felicitate the people who have a Person from Porlock  
To break up everything and throw it away  
Because then there will be nothing to keep them  
And they need not stay.

★

Why do they grumble so much?  
He comes like a benison  
They should be glad he has not forgotten them  
They might have had to go on.

★

These thoughts are depressing I know. They are depressing,  
I wish I was more cheerful, it is more pleasant,  
Also it is a duty, we should smile as well as submitting  
To the purpose of One Above who is experimenting  
With various mixtures of human character which goes best,  
All is interesting for him it is exciting, but not for us.  
There I go again. Smile, smile, and get some work to do  
Then you will be practically unconscious without positively  
having to go.

## THE FROG PRINCE

I am a frog  
I live under a spell  
I live at the bottom  
Of a green well

And here I must wait  
Until a maiden places me  
On her royal pillow  
And kisses me  
In her father's palace.

The story is familiar  
Everybody knows it well  
But do other enchanted people feel as nervous  
As I do? The stories do not tell,

Ask if they will be happier  
When the changes come  
As already they are fairly happy  
In a frog's doom?

✍ I have been a frog now  
For a hundred years  
And in all this time  
I have not shed many tears,

I am happy, I like the life,  
Can swim for many a mile  
(When I have hopped to the river)  
And am for ever agile.

And the quietness,  
Yes, I like to be quiet  
I am habituated  
To a quiet life,

But always when I think these thoughts  
As I sit in my well  
Another thought comes to me and says:  
It is part of the spell

To be happy  
To work up contentment  
To make much of being a frog  
To fear disenchantment

Says, It will be *heavenly*  
To be set free,  
Cries, *Heavenly* the girl who disenchants  
And the royal times, *heavenly*,  
And I think it will be.

Come then, royal girl and royal times,  
Come quickly,  
I can be happy until you come  
But I cannot be *heavenly*,  
Only disenchanted people  
Can be *heavenly*.

## A HOUSE OF MERCY

It was a house of female habitation,  
Two ladies fair inhabited the house,  
And they were brave. For although Fear knocked loud  
Upon the door, and said he must come in,  
They did not let him in.

There were also two feeble babes, two girls,  
That Mrs S. had by her husband had,  
He soon left them and went away to sea,  
Nor sent them money, nor came home again  
Except to borrow back  
Her Naval Officer's Wife's Allowance from Mrs S.  
Who gave it him at once, she thought she should.

There was also the ladies' aunt  
And babes' great aunt, a Mrs Martha Hearn Clode,  
And she was elderly.  
These ladies put their money all together  
And so we lived.

I was the younger of the feeble babes  
And when I was a child my mother died  
And later Great Aunt Martha Hearn Clode died  
And later still my sister went away.

Now I am old I tend my mother's sister  
The noble aunt who so long tended us,  
Faithful and True her name is. Tranquil.  
Also Sardonic. And I tend the house.

It is a house of female habitation  
A house expecting strength as it is strong  
A house of aristocratic mould that looks apart  
When tears fall; counts despair  
Derisory. Yet it has kept us well. For all its faults,  
If they are faults, of sternness and reserve,  
It is a Being of warmth I think; at heart  
A house of mercy.

## AVONDALE

How sweet the birds of Avondale  
Of Avondale, of Avondale,  
How sweet the birds of Avondale  
Do swoop and swing and call.



The children too of Avondale,  
Of Avondale, of Avondale,  
The boys and girls of Avondale  
Do swoop and swing and call,

And all the little cats and dogs,  
Of Avondale, of Avondale,  
In their own way in Avondale  
Do swoop and swing and call,

And oh it is a pleasant sight  
It is a very pleasant sight  
To see the creatures so delight  
To swoop and swing and call,  
In Avondale, in Avondale,  
To see them swoop and call.

## SCORPION

‘This night shall thy soul be required of thee’  
*My* soul is never required of *me*  
It always has to be somebody else of course  
Will my soul be required of me tonight perhaps?

(I often wonder what it will be like  
To have one’s soul required of one  
But all I can think of is the Out-Patients’ Department –  
‘Are you Mrs Briggs, dear?’  
No, I am Scorpion.)

I should like my soul to be required of me, so as  
To waft over grass till it comes to the blue sea  
I am very fond of grass, I always have been, but there must  
Be no cow, person or house to be seen.

Sea and grass must be quite empty  
Other souls can find somewhere *else*.

O Lord God please come  
And require the soul of thy Scorpion

Scorpion so wishes to be gone.

SEYMOUR AND CHANTELE  
or  
UN PEU DE VICE

*In memory of A. Swinburne and Mary Gordon.*

Pull my arm back, Seymour,  
Like the boys do,  
Oh Seymour, the pain, the pain,  
Still more then, do.  
I am thy schoolboy friend, now I  
Am not Chantelle any more but mi.  
Say 'sweet mi', 'my sweet mi'. Oh the pain, the pain,  
Kiss me and I will kiss you again.

Tell me, Seymour, when they . . . when . . .  
Does it hurt as much as this  
And this and this? Ah what pain.  
When I do so I feel  
How very painful it is for you,  
No I will, so, again and again,  
Now stuff the dockleaves in your mouth  
And bite the pain.

Seymour, when you hold me so tight it hurts  
I feel my ribs break and the blood spurt,

Oh what heaven, what bliss,  
Will you kiss me, if I give you this  
Kiss, and this and this? Like this?

Seymour, this morning Nanny swished me so hard  
(Because I told her she had the face  
Of an antediluvian animal that had  
Become extinct because of being so wet)  
She broke her hair-brush. What bliss.  
No, don't stop me now with a kiss, oh God it was pain-  
Ful, I could not stop crying.

Oh darling, what heaven, how did you think  
Of doing that? You are my sweetest angel of a  
Little cousin, and your tears  
Are as nice as the sea, as icy and salt as it is.

## HOW DO YOU SEE?

How do you see the Holy Spirit of God?  
I see him as the holy spirit of good,  
But I do not think we should talk about spirits, I think  
We should call good, good.

But it is a beautiful idea, is it not?  
And productive of good?

Yes, that is the problem, it is productive of good,  
As Christianity now is productive of good,  
So that a person who does not believe the Christian faith  
Feels he must keep silent, in case good suffers,  
In case what good there is in the world diminishes.

But must we allow good to be hitched to a lie,  
A beautiful cruel lie, a beautiful fairy story,  
A beautiful idea, made up in a loving moment?

Yes, it is a beautiful idea, one of the most  
Beautiful ideas Christianity has ever had,  
This idea of the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost,  
My heart goes out to this beautiful Holy Ghost,  
He is so beautifully inhuman, he is like the fresh air.  
They represent him as a bird, I dislike that,  
A bird is parochial to our world, rooted as we are  
In pain and cruelty. Better the fresh air.

But before we take a Christian idea to alter it  
We should look what the idea is, we should read in their books  
Of holy instruction what the Christians say. What do they say  
Of the beautiful Holy Ghost? They say

That the beautiful Holy Ghost brooded on chaos  
And chaos gave birth to form. As this we cannot know  
It can only be beautiful if told as a fairy story,  
Told as a fact it is harmful, for it is not a fact.

But it is a beautiful fairy story. I feel so much  
The pleasure of the bird on the dark and powerful waters,  
And here I like to think of him as a bird, I like to feel  
The masterful bird's great pleasure in his breast  
Touching the water. Like! Like! What else do they say?

Oh I know we must put away the beautiful fairy stories  
And learn to be good in a dull way without enchantment,  
Yes, we must. What else do they say? They say

That the beautiful Holy Spirit burning intensely,  
Alight as never was anything in this world alight,  
Inspired the scriptures. But they are wrong,

Often the scriptures are wrong. For I see the Pope  
Has forbidden the verse in Mark ever to be discussed again  
And I see a doctor of Catholic divinity saying  
That some verses in the New Testament are pious forgeries  
Interpolated by eager clerks avid for good.

Ah good, what is good, is it good  
To leave in scripture the spurious verses and not print  
A footnote to say they are spurious, an erratum slip?

And the penal sentences of Christ: He that believeth  
And is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not  
Shall be damned. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire  
Prepared for the devil and his angels. And then  
Saddest of all the words in scripture, the words,  
They went away into everlasting punishment. Is this good?

Yes, nowadays certainly it is very necessary before we take  
The ideas of Christianity, the words of our Lord,  
To make them good, when often they are not very good,  
To see what the ideas are and the words; to look at them.

Does the beautiful Holy Ghost endorse the doctrine of eternal hell?  
Love cruelty, enjoin the sweet comforts of religion?  
Oh yes, Christianity, yes, he must do this  
For he is your God, and in your books

You say he informs, gives form, gives life, instructs.  
Instructs, that is the bitterest part. For what does he instruct  
As to the dreadful bargain, that God would take and offer  
The death of the Son to buy our faults away,  
The faults of the faulty creatures of the Trinity?  
Oh Christianity, instructed by the Holy Ghost,  
What do you mean? As to Christ, what do you mean?

It was a child of Europe who cried this cry,  
Oh Holy Ghost what do you mean as to Christ?  
I heard him cry. Ah me, the poor child,  
Tearing away his heart to be good  
Without enchantment. I heard him cry:

Oh Christianity, Christianity,  
Why do you not answer our difficulties?  
If He was God He was not like us  
He could not lose.

Can Perfection be less than perfection?  
Can the creator of the Devil be bested by him?  
What can the temptation to possess the earth have meant to Him  
Who made and possessed it? What do you mean? ,

And Sin, how could He take our sins upon Him? What does it  
mean?

To take sin upon one is not the same  
As to have sin inside one and feel guilty.

It is horrible to feel guilty,  
We feel guilty because we are.  
Was He horrible? Did He feel guilty?

You say He was born humble – but He was not,  
He was born God –

Taking our nature upon Him But then you say  
He was perfect Man. Do you mean  
Perfectly Man, meaning wholly? Or Man without sin? Ah  
Perfect Man without sin is not what we are.

Do you mean He did not know that He was God,  
Did not know He was the Second Person of the Trinity?  
(Oh if He knew this and was,

It was a source of strength for Him we do not have)  
But this theology of emptying you preach sometimes –  
That He emptied Himself of knowing He was God – seems  
A theology of false appearances  
To mock your facts, as He was God whether He knew it or not.

Oh what do you mean, what do you mean?  
You never answer our difficulties.

You say, Christianity, you say  
That the Trinity is unchanging from eternity,  
But then you say  
At the incarnation He took  
Our Manhood into the Godhead  
That did not have it before,  
So it must have altered it,  
Having it.

Oh what do you mean, what do you mean?  
You never answer our questions.

So I heard the child of Europe cry,  
Tearing his heart away  
To be good without enchantment,  
Going away bleeding.

Oh how sad it is to give up the Holy Ghost  
He is so beautiful, but not when you look close,  
And the consolations of religion are so beautiful,  
But not when you look close.  
Is it beautiful, for instance, is it productive of good  
That the Roman Catholic hierarchy should be endlessly discussing  
at this moment  
Their shifty theology of birth control, the Vatican  
Claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? No, it is not good,

Or productive of good. It is productive  
Of contempt and disgust. Yet  
On the whole Christianity I suppose is kinder than it was,  
Helped to it, I fear, by the power of the Civil Arm.

Oh Christianity, Christianity,  
That has grown kinder now, as in the political world  
The colonial system grows kinder before it vanishes, are you  
    vanishing?  
Is it not time for you to vanish?

I do not think we shall be able to bear much longer the dishonesty  
Of clinging for comfort to beliefs we do not believe in,  
For comfort, and to be comfortably free of the fear  
Of diminishing good, as if truth were a convenience.  
I think if we do not learn quickly, and learn to teach children,  
To be good without enchantment, without the help  
Of beautiful painted fairy stories pretending to be true,  
Then I think it will be too much for us, the dishonesty,  
And, armed as we are now, we shall kill everybody,  
It will be too much for us, we shall kill everybody.

## THE ASS

In the wood of Wallow  
Mash, walked Eugenia, a callow  
Girl, they said she was,  
An Ass.

Beyond the wood there lay a soppy morass  
But the path across was firm, was  
Not a-wash.



Three years in the wood Eugenia stayed  
By briar and bramble and lost ways she was delayed,  
And in a witch's house within a thicket of yew trees  
Was put to work, but seemed so happy that the witch  
Finding no pleasure in her tyranny  
Gave her release.  
She is an ass, she cried, let her pass.  
And perish in the soppy mó rass.

Eugenia was as happy in the change  
To be free to roam and range  
As she had been happy and not sad or sorry  
At her labours in the witch's bothy.  
The sun fell hot upon the causeway  
That was not very wide  
And the mó rass sopped and shuffled  
Either side.

And the little beetles ran  
About, and all the gnats and the mosquitoes sang  
And the mó rass was as sweet a green  
As Eugenia had ever seen.

She sang: Baa-baa-ba-bay  
And seven happy years spent on the way.

Once there came a fiend  
Who tempted her to go upon the green  
Mó rass: Come, ass, and go  
Upon the green. But she said, No.  
She was not such an ass to try the green,  
It would deliver her below.

Heigh-ho, heigh-ho,  
Never was such a happy idle ass  
Since idleness ran glad in Paradise  
As Eugenia was.  
Paradise. Paradise.

Now the seven years have passed,  
The causeway's ended, the soppy mórrass  
Has sucked its last; the ass  
Comes to a sandy pass  
Between low sandhills that are tufted over the esparto grass.  
Beyond, the great seas splash  
And roll in pleasure to be so a-wash,  
Their white crests coming at a dash  
To fetch the ass.

Oh my poor ass  
To run so quickly as if coming home  
To where the great waves crash.  
Now she is gone. I thought  
Into her tomb.

Yet often as I walk that sandy shore  
And think the seas  
Have long since combed her out that lies  
Beneath, I hear the sweet ass singing still with joy as if  
She had won some great prize, as if  
All her best wish had come to pass.

## A SOLDIER DEAR TO US

It was the War  
I was a child  
They came from the trenches  
To our suburb mild.

Our suburb then was more a country place  
They came to our house for release.

In the convalescent Army hospital  
That was once a great house and landed estate  
Lay Basil, wounded on the Somme,  
But his pain was not now so great

That he could not be fetched in a bath-chair  
Or hobble on crutches to find in our house there  
My mother and aunt, his friends on leave, myself (I was twelve)  
And a hearth rug to lie down in front of the fire on and rest  
himself.

It was a November golden and wet  
As there had been little wind that year and the leaves were yet  
Yellow on the great trees, on the oak trees and elms  
Of our beautiful suburb, as it was then.

When Basil woke up he liked to talk and laugh  
He was a sweet-tempered laughing man, he said:  
'My dear, listen to this' then he read  
From The Church Times, how angry the Bishop was because  
Of the Reserved Sacrament in the church  
Of St Alban's, Holborn. 'Now, my dear' he said, 'for a treat  
Next Sunday I will take you to All Saints, Margaret Street; only  
You will have to sit on the ladies' side, though you are not yet one  
really.'

Basil never spoke of the trenches, but I  
Saw them always, saw the mud, heard the guns, saw the  
    duckboards,  
Saw the men and the horses slipping in the great mud, saw  
The rain falling and never stop, saw the gaunt  
Trees and the rusty frame  
Of the abandoned gun carriages. Because it was the same  
As the poem 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came'  
I was reading at school.

Basil and Tommy and Joey Porteous who came to our house  
Were too brave even to ask *themselves* if there was any hope  
So I laughed as they laughed, as they laughed when Basil said:  
What will Ronny do now (it was Ronny Knox) will he pope?

And later, when he had popped, Tommy gave me his book for a  
    present,  
'The Spiritual Aeneid' and I read of the great torment  
Ronny had had to decide, Which way, this or that?  
But I thought Basil and Tommy and Joey Porteous were more  
    brave than that.

Coming to our house  
Were the brave ones And I could not look at them,  
For my strong feelings, except  
Slantingly, from the hearth rug, look at them.

Oh Basil, Basil, you had such a merry heart  
But you taught me a secret you did not perhaps mean to impart,  
That one must speak lightly, and use fair names like the ladies  
They used to call  
The Eumenides.

Oh Basil  
I was a child at school,  
My school lessons coloured  
My thoughts of you.

*Envoi*

Tommy and Joey Porteous were killed in France. Now fifty years  
later  
Basil has died of the shots he got in the shell crater  
The shrapnel has worked round at last to his merry heart, I write  
this  
For a memorial of the soldier dear to us he was.

## THE FORLORN SEA



Our Princess married  
A fairy King,  
It was a sensational  
Wedding.

Now they live in a palace  
Of porphyry,  
Far, far away,  
By the forlorn sea.

Sometimes people visit them,  
Last week they invited me;  
That is how I can tell you  
They live by a forlorn sea.

(They said: Here's a magic carpet,  
Come on this,  
And when you arrive  
We will give you a big kiss.)

I play in the palace garden,  
I climb the sycamore tree,  
Sometimes I swim  
In the fòrlorn sea.

The King and the Princess are shadowy,  
Yet beautiful,  
They are waited on by white cats,  
Who are dutiful.

It is like a dream  
When they kiss and cuddle me,  
But I like it, I like it,  
I do not wish to break free.

So I eat all they give me  
Because I have read  
If you eat fairy food  
You will never wake up in your own bed,

But will go on living,  
As has happened to me,  
Far, far away  
By a fòrlorn sea.

## ANGEL BOLEY

There was a wicked woman called Malady Festing  
Who lived with her son-in-law, Hark Boley,  
And her daughter Angel,  
In a house on the high moorlands  
Of the West Riding of Yorkshire  
In the middle of the last century.

One day Angel  
Overheard her mother, Malady, talking to Hark, her husband.  
Hark, said Malady, it is time  
To take another couple of children  
Into our kitchen.  
Hark laughed, for he too was wicked and he knew  
For what purpose the little children  
Were required.

But Angel, who was not happy and so  
Lived out her life in a dream of absentmindedness,  
In order not to be too much aware  
Of her horrible relatives, and what it was  
That happened every now and then  
In the kitchen; and why the children who came  
Were never seen again, this time  
When she heard what her husband and mother said,  
Came out of her absentmindedness and paid attention.  
I know now, she said, and all the time I have known  
What I did not want to know, that they kill all children  
They lure to this house; and that is why, when I pass in the village,  
The people look askance at me, and they whisper –  
But not so that I cannot hear –  
There goes the daughter of Mother Lure. And the stranger says:  
Who is Mother Lure? And they answer: Mrs Festing and they  
make the sign



That is to protect them from evil. Selfish wretches, said Angel,  
They do not mind about the children, that evil is not kept from  
them.

Angel wandered into the woods and she said: No more children  
Are going to be murdered, and before they are murdered,  
tormented

And corrupted; no more children are going to be the victims  
Of Mother Lure and my husband, Hark. Dark was the look then  
On Angel's face, and she said: I am the Angel of Death.

Mrs Festing and Boley

Always left the cooking to Angel, they despised Angel but Angel  
Could cook, and that they thought was all she was fit for,  
To cook and keep house. And they realized  
It was far from being to their disadvantage that Angel was,  
As they thought, half-witted, and never knew  
Or wanted to know, what was going on around her.

As soon as Angel

Said to herself: I am the Angel of Death

She became at once very practical and went out into the woods  
and fields

And gathered some *A. Phalloides*, commonly called the 'white'  
or deadly

*Amanita*, a mushroom of high toxicity. These poisonous fungi  
She put into a soup, and this soup she gave  
To Hark, and her mother, Malady, for supper, so that they died.

Angel then went to the police and said:

I have done evil, but I have saved many children.

The Judge said: Why did you not tell the police

That children were being destroyed? There was no proof, said  
Angel,

Because there were no bodies. I never could find out

What they did with the children after they had killed them.

So then the police searched hard, the wells, the rivers and the  
woodlands,

But never could they find out where  
The children lay. Nor had the parents of the children  
At any time done anything but weep. For they thought their  
children

Had been bewitched and done away with, and that  
If they told their fears of Mother Lure and her wickedness  
To the police, they would not believe them, and more children  
than ever  
Would disappear.

From then onwards in the trial, Angel spoke  
No word more, except to say: I am the Angel of Death.  
So they put her in a lunatic asylum, and soon she died  
Of an outbreak of typhoid fever. The people of the village  
Now loved Angel, because she had delivered them from the fear

Of Mother Lure and Hark Boley, and had saved their  
Little children from being tormented and slain by these wicked  
people.

So they wrote on her tombstone: 'She did evil that good  
Might come'. But the Vicar said it was better not to put this but  
Just her name and age, which was sixteen.

So he had the words  
The villagers had written taken off the tombstone. But the next  
day

The words were again on the tombstone; so again the Vicar had  
them

Removed. And this time a watch was set on the grave,  
A police constable and the village sexton watched there that  
night.

And no man came again to write on the tombstone  
The forbidden words. Yet when morning came,  
Again the words were on the tombstone.  
So the Vicar said: It is the hand of the Lord.

And now in that graveyard, at that grave's head beneath the yew  
trees,  
Still stands today the tombstone of Angel, with the words writ  
on it:  
'She did evil that good might come'. May God be merciful.

## THE DONKEY

It was such a pretty little donkey  
It had such pretty ears  
And it used to gallop round the field so briskly  
Though well down in years.

It was a retired donkey,  
After a life-time of working  
Between the shafts of regular employment  
It was now free to go merrymaking.

Oh in its eyes was such a gleam  
As is usually associated with youth  
But it was not a youthful gleam really,  
But full of mature truth.

And of the hilarity that goes with age,  
As if to tell us sardonically  
No hedged track lay before this donkey longer  
But the sweet prairies of anarchy.

But the sweet prairies of anarchy  
And the thought that keeps my heart up  
That at last, in Death's odder anarchy,  
Our pattern will be broken all up.  
Though precious we are momentarily, donkey,  
I aspire to be broken up.

## COCK-A-DOO

I love to hear the cock crow in  
The middle of the day  
It is an eerie sound in  
The middle of the day  
Sometimes it is a very hot day  
Heavy for coming thunder  
And the grass I tread on is dusty  
And burnt yellow. Away  
Over the river Bean which naturally  
(It having been hot now for so long)  
Runs shallow, stand up  
The great yellow cornfields, but  
Walking closely by the farm track  
Not lifting my head, but foot by  
Foot slowly, tired after a long  
Walk, I see only the blue  
And gray of the flint path, and  
Each one of the particles of  
Yellow dust on it And this  
Seeing, because of tiredness, becomes  
A transfixion of seeing, more sharp  
Than mirages are. Now comes the cry  
Of the cock at midday  
An eerie sound – cock-a-doooo – it

Sharpens a second time  
The transfixion. If there were  
A third sharpener  
Coming this hot day with a butcher's edge  
It would spell death.

## FRANCESCA IN WINTER

O love sweet love  
I feel this love  
It burns me so  
It comes not from above

It burns me so  
The flames run close  
Can you not see  
How the flames toss

Our souls like paper  
On the air?  
Our souls are white  
As ashes are

O love sweet love  
Will our love burn  
Love till our love  
To ashes turn?

I wish hellfire  
Played fire's part  
And burnt to end  
Flesh soul and heart

Then we could sit beside our fire  
With quiet love  
Not fear to look in flames and see  
A shadow move.

Ah me, only  
In heaven's permission  
Are creatures quiet  
In their condition.

## SO TO FATNESS COME

Poor human race that must  
Feed on pain, or choose another dish  
And hunger worse.

There is also a cup of pain, for  
You to drink all up, or,  
Setting it aside for sweeter drink,  
Thirst evermore.

I am thy friend I wish  
You to sup full of the dish  
I give you and the drink,  
And so to fatness come more than  
In health of opened heart, and life

Grief spake these words to me  
He spake no more than grace,  
And no less than truth.

## THE SALLOW BIRD

A sallow bird sat on a tree  
Yclad in black from head to hee'  
And oh he wept sac piteously.

Why sitst thou there and a' so blackit?  
Why sitst thou there in thy black jacket,  
With feathers furled?

Ah me, ah me,  
Come now, tell me.

Then spake the birds in accents sar'  
'Something human's dearer far  
To me than wealth of a' the world,  
And I lack it, and I lack it, I lack it.'

Never seyde he word again  
(Nor went away) Yet oft in pain  
He'll hauk that crik as if he spak it:  
'I lack it, I lack it, I lack it.'

## THE WORD

My heart leaps up with streams of joy,  
My lips tell of drouth,  
Why should my heart be full of joy  
And not my mouth?

I fear the Word, to speak or write it down,  
I fear all that is brought to birth and born;  
This fear has turned my joy into a frown.

## NOR WE OF HER TO HIM

He said no word of her to us  
Nor we of her to him,  
But oh it saddened us to see  
How wan he grew and thin.  
We said · She eats him day and night  
And draws the blood from him,  
We did not know but said we thought  
This was why he grew thin.

One day we called and rang the bell,  
No answer came within,  
We said : She must have took him off  
To the forest old and grim,  
It has fell out, we said, that she  
Eats him in forest grim,  
And how can we help him being eaten  
Up in forests grim?

It is a restless time we spend,  
We have no help for him,  
We walk about and go to bed,  
It is no help to him.  
Sometimes we shake our heads and say  
It might have better been  
If he had spoke to us of her  
Or we of her to him.  
Which makes us feel helpful, until  
The silence comes again.



## MRS BLOW AND HER ANIMALS

There was a dog called Clanworthy  
Who lived with his friend the cat Hopdance  
In the house of Mrs Blow, a widow,  
Upon a glade in Cluny.

Hey, Hopdance,  
How is Mrs Blow?  
So-so, said Hopdance,  
Bow, said the dog.

Mrs Blow  
Loved her animals very much  
She often said  
I do not know what I should do  
Without Hopdance and  
Clanworthy.

They loved her too.

Hey, Hopdance,  
How is Mrs Blow?  
So-so, said Hopdance,  
She is not very well, said the dog.

Hopdance fetched her a fish  
Which she cooked by the fire.  
That will do her good  
Said Hopdance, but, said the dog,  
She must have wine as well as food.

*Clanworthy, brave Clanworthy,  
Clanworthy for aye  
Through fire and water brought wine  
That Mrs Blow might not die.*

Mrs Blow has now become their only thought  
And care,  
All the other animals

In the forest of Cluny  
Say there is no talking to them now  
Because their only thought is Mrs Blow.  
Hey Hopdance,  
How is Mrs Blow?  
Oh, very well now.  
She is quite recovered, said the dog.

But a woodcutter has opined  
It was the spirit of Mrs Blow he saw dancing one night  
When a full moon fell on the glade of Cluny  
With her animals, and that  
Clanworthy and Hopdance  
Stood upright upon their hind legs  
Holding the hand of Mrs Blow the widow  
As if she was a child.  
If it was Mrs Blow  
But he said he thought it was the ghost  
Of Mrs Blow, her spirit, and that  
The animals, too, did not look like animals, he said  
It was three spirits playing ring-a-ring  
With crowns on their head.

So everyone remembered then  
That a long time ago  
The King and Queen had lost their little children  
As  
A great witch had changed the boys into animals  
And the girl into Mrs Blow the widow

*Crying: Hopdance, go Hopdance; Glamworthy go,  
For a hundred and seven years  
Be the animals of Mrs Blow.*

Everyone was glad it had come right  
And that the princes and the princess  
Were dancing in the night.

## OH GRATEFUL COLOURS, BRIGHT LOOKS!

The grass is green  
The tulip is red  
A ginger cat walks over  
The pink almond petals on the flower bed.  
Enough has been said to show  
It is life we are talking about. Oh  
Grateful colours, bright looks! Well, to go  
On Fabricated things too – front doors and gates,  
Bricks, slates, paving stones – are coloured  
And as it has been raining and is sunny now  
They shine. Only that puddle  
Which, reflecting the height of the sky  
Quite gives one a feeling of vertigo, shows  
No colour, is a negative. Men!  
Seize colours quick, heap them up while you can.  
But perhaps it is a false tale that says  
The landscape of the dead  
Is colourless.

## O PUG!

*To the Brownes' pug dog, on my lap, in their car,  
coming home from Norfolk.*

O Pug, some people do not like you,  
But I like you,  
Some people say you do not breathe, you snore,  
I don't mind,  
One person says he is always conscious of your behind,  
Is that your fault?

Your own people love you,  
All the people in the family that owns you  
Love you: Good pug, they cry, Happy pug,  
Pug-come-for-a-walk.

You are an old dog now  
And in all your life  
You have never had cause for a moment's anxiety,  
Yet,  
In those great eyes of yours,  
Those liquid and protuberant orbs,  
Lies the shadow of immense insecurity. There  
Panic walks.

Yes, yes, I know,  
When your mistress is with you,  
When your master  
Takes you upon his lap,  
Just then, for a moment,  
Almost you are not frightened.

But at heart you are frightened, you always have been.

O Pug, obstinate old nervous breakdown,  
In the midst of so much love,  
*And* such comfort,  
Still to feel unsafe and be afraid,

How one's heart goes out to you!

## ARCHIE AND TINA

Archie and Tina

Where are you now,  
Playmates of my childhood,  
Brother and sister?

When we stayed in the same place  
With Archie and Tina  
At the seaside,  
We used

To paddle the samphire beds, fish  
Crabs from the sea-pool, poke  
The anemones, run,  
Trailing the ribbon seaweed across the sand to the sea's edge  
To throw it in as far as we could. We dug  
White bones of dead animals from the sandhills, found  
The jaw-bone of a fox with some teeth in it, a stoat's skull,  
The hind leg of a hare.

Oh, if only; oh, if only!

Archie and Tina

Had a dog called Bam. The silver-sand  
Got in his long hair. He had  
To be taken home.

Oh, if only . . . !

One day when the wind blew strong  
Our dog, Boy, got earache. He had  
To be taken home in a jersey.

Oh what pleasure, what pleasure !

There never were so many poppies as there were then,  
So much yellow corn, so many fine days,  
Such sharp bright air, such seas.

Was it necessary that  
Archie and Tina, Bam and Boy,  
Should have been there too?  
Yes, then it was. But to say now:

Where are you today  
Archie and Tina,  
Playmates of my childhood,  
Brother and sister? Is no more than to say:

I remember  
Such pleasure, so much pleasure.

## THE POET HIN



The foolish poet wonders  
Why so much honour  
Is given to other poets  
But to him  
No honour is given.

I am much condescended to, said the poet Hin,  
By my inferiors. And, said the poet Hin,  
On my tombstone I will have inscribed:  
'He was much condescended to by his inferiors.'  
Then, said the poet Hin,  
I shall be properly remembered.

Hin – wiping his tears away, I cried –  
Your words tell me  
You know the correct use of *shall* and *will*.  
That, Hin, is something we may think about,  
May, may, may, man.

Well yes, true, said Hin, stopping crying then,  
Well yes, but true only in part,  
Well, your wiping my tears away  
Was a part.

But ah me, ah me,  
So much vanity, said he, is in my heart.  
Yet not light always is the pain  
That roots in levity. Or without fruit wholly  
As from this levity's  
Flowering pang of melancholy  
May grow what is weighty,  
May come beauty.

True too, Hin, true too Well, as now: You have gone on  
Differently from what you begun.  
Yet both truths have validity,  
The one meanly begot, the other nobly,  
And as each alone glosses over  
What the other says, so only together  
Have they a full thought to uncover.



## THE HOUSE OF OVER-DEW

Over-dew

Became a dread name for Cynthia

In 1937

It was then that Mr Minnim first began to talk openly  
About his dear wish.

How dear it was to be

For all of them !

Mr and Mrs Minnim had two sons

Who had done well at school

And won scholarships to Oxford.

Their boyhood was a happy time for all. Then

The elder son married Helen,

A fellow-student at the university,

And, coming down, found a good post with sufficient money.

His wife also

Had money of her own, they were doing well.

The younger son, Georgie,

Was engaged to Cynthia. But that did not go so well.

He took a First in Greats, but then

The difficulties began. He could not find a job.

He did nothing, tried again ; no good.

He grew sulky. It seemed hopeless.

It was now that the dread name of Over-Dew

Was spoken,

And a scheme bruited. It was this:

The Minnims were sincere and practising Christians, to

Mr Minnim

Anyone who was not a Christian

Was a half-educated person.

It was, for instance, suggested  
That his daughter-in-law should write a Life of St Benedict,  
There was no good life of St Benedict, said Mr Minnim.  
So Cynthia suggested that Helen should write it,  
Because Helen was a Mediaeval History student,

Whereas Cynthia herself was a Latinist,  
So why not Helen, with her special knowledge?  
But Helen was not a Christian,  
So, 'No', said Mr Minnim, she was a half-educated person.

The Over-Dew scheme was orthodox Christian.  
When Mr Minnim retired from his accountancy work  
He said that they should move from the suburb where they lived  
And buy the house of Over-Dew, which was  
A retreat for missionaries to have  
On their leave-holidays in England.  
And now it was being run, he said, in a fantastical fashion.

When they bought it  
Everything would be better,  
And different.  
Where was the money to come from? No matter,  
They had their savings, also they had the faith  
Of Mr and Mrs Minnim.

Mrs Minnim loved her husband  
And was pleased to follow him to the end of the earth, and  
certainly  
Over-Dew was not that.

But oh when Cynthia heard that word  
It was the knell  
Of all her life and love This, she said,  
Is the end of happy days, and the beginning

Of calamity. Over-Dew, she thought,  
Shall be the death of my love and the death of life.  
For to that tune, she thought,  
Shall come up a European war and personal defeat.

The Georgie situation  
Was already sad. What could she do there?

Nothing,

But see him and be silent and so enrage,  
Or see him and speak, and the more enrage.  
The wise and affectionate Cynthia  
Must break the engagement and give back the ring.  
There is nothing but this that she can do.  
She takes up a post at London University  
And in lecturing and study passes the days.  
No more of that.

She has read a paper to her pupils  
And fellow-dons, the subject is  
The development of Latin from the first early growth  
Upon the Grecian models. The study entrances,  
She finds and reads a Latin prayer:  
'I devote to Hades and Destruction'. It is a prayer  
For time of battle, the thought is this:  
I dedicate the enemy to Hades and Destruction.

And perhaps

One or two of the praying Romans  
Will devote also themselves  
To Hades and Destruction. Rushing then into battle,  
These 'devoted' people hope they may be killed.

If not,

They are held for dead,  
They are stateless, and in religion  
Have no part at all. The gods have not accepted them,  
They are alive, but yet they are destroyed.

In Cynthia's life, this sad year  
Was twice as long as all the happy years before.

She must now

Withdraw from Georgie and see him miserable.

She is at work and fast within her family,  
The happy careless laughter  
Of the brothers and sisters  
Rings her round,  
She has the home tasks, too,  
And thinks of Georgie.

At the end of the year, in the bitter snow that fell that Christmas  
The phrenzied Minnims  
Moved from their life-long suburb.

The house of Over-Dew  
Lay buried half in snow,  
It stood five miles from any town upon a hillside.  
Very bleak it was, and all the pipes were froze.  
Mrs Minnim worked hard,  
They had a girl to help them then she left.

Mrs Minnim had courage and was cheerful  
But she was by now an old lady. Suddenly  
There was the gift of a little money Mr Minnim  
Bought chasubles for visiting priests But at first  
There were no visitors at all, but only  
The old cold house, and the lavatories frozen up  
And wood kindling to be chopped and dried.  
The work was bitter hard.  
Mr Minnim, released suddenly  
From the routine of his accountancy  
Suffered in his head a strange numbness,  
He moved about in a dream, would take no hand with the dishes.  
Even

When five-and-twenty missionaries came for a conference  
He would do nothing.  
He paced the garden plots, 'And here' he said,  
'I will build twelve lavatories. And in this room  
We will have a consecration and build an altar.'

The thaw came and turned all to mud and slush,  
There was still no post for Georgie, he came down from Oxford  
And washed the dishes for his mother,  
And chopped the wood and moved also in a daze,  
The immense learning  
Lay off from him, the crude work of the house  
Was an excuse from study.

But now Mrs Minnim was not happy, like a sad animal  
She roamed the rooms of Over-Dew. This woman  
Who had been so boisterous and so loving  
With many friends, but still her own best thoughts  
For Mr Minnim and their sons,  
Was like a sad animal that cannot know a reason

Georgie, with the guilt of the excuse upon his heart,  
Grew savage with her. The moody silences  
Were shot with cruel words  
It was so bitter cold within the house  
Though now without the snow was melted and turned to slush.

The money situation preyed upon the mind of Mrs Minnim.

But her husband  
Spoke of faith.

In the suburb where they once lived friends said:  
How are the Minnims? Did you hear  
That Mr Minnim had bought chasubles?

And then the foolish, unkind laughter: Chasubles!  
It will be  
The ruin of them, the end.

There was one hope that Mrs Minnim had, it was this,  
That they might return at last to their house in the suburb,  
She had refused to let her husband  
Sell this house. No, that she would not allow, No,  
That must be for a return.  
But now, out of this refusal was made  
The bitterness of their life at Over-Dew. For, said her husband,  
You kept back the seven hundred and fifty pounds  
We might have had for selling the house.

In London

The girl who should have been Georgie's wife  
Hears all; understands; loves Georgie; is helpless:  
reads to her class

The Latin prayer: I dévote to Hades and Destruction.  
She rules the harsh thoughts that run; cries;  
'Come, love of God.'

## THE GALLOPING CAT

Oh I am a cat that likes to  
Gallop about doing good  
So  
One day when I was  
Galloping about doing good, I saw  
A Figure in the path; I said:  
Get off! (Be-  
cause  
I am a cat that likes to  
Gallop about doing good)  
But he did not move, instead  
He raised his hand as if  
To land me a cuff  
So I made to dodge so as to  
Prevent him bring it off,  
Un-for-tune-ately I slid  
On a banana skin  
Some Ass had left instead  
Of putting in the bin. So  
His hand caught me on the cheek  
I tried  
To lay his arm open from wrist to elbow  
With my sharp teeth  
Because I am  
A cat that likes to gallop about doing good.  
Would you believe it?  
He wasn't there  
My teeth met nothing but air,  
But a Voice said: Poor cat,  
(Meaning me) and a soft stroke  
Came on me head  
Since when  
I have been bald.

I regard myself as  
A martyr to doing good.  
Also I heard a swoosh  
As of wings, and saw  
A halo shining at the height of  
Mrs Gubbins's backyard fence,  
So I thought: What's the good  
Of galloping about doing good  
When angels stand in the path  
And do not do as they should  
Such as having an arm to be bitten off  
All the same I  
Intend to go on being  
A cat that likes to  
Gallop about doing good  
So  
Now with my bald head I go,  
Chopping the untidy flowers down, to and fro,  
An' scooping up the grass to show  
Underneath  
The cinder path of wrath  
Ha ha ha ha, ho,  
Angels aren't the only ones who do not know  
What's what and that  
Galloping about doing good  
Is a full-time job  
That needs  
An experienced eye of earthly  
Sharpness, worth I dare say  
(If you'll forgive a personal note)  
A good deal more  
Than all that skyey stuff  
Of angels that make so bold as  
To pity a cat like me that  
Gallops about doing good.



## HIPPY-MO

I had a sweet bird  
Called Hippy-Mo  
But he did not wish to stay  
With me, he wished to go.  
Hippy-Mo, Hippy-Mo.

I hugged him tight, I said:  
You shall not go,  
You shall stay here with me  
Hippy-Mo.

Then he grew tall as a house,  
Hippy-Mo,  
Took me in his claws and would  
Not let me go,  
Hippy-Mo.

His eyes were black as the night  
Through which we flew,  
And the lightnings flashed from his eyes  
As we flew through,  
Hippy-Mo what are  
You going to do  
With me?

Hippy-Mo, Hippy-Mo,  
Brought me to a sunny land.  
Put me in a cage  
Wherein I rage  
And when I rage he holds  
My hand  
So tight I cannot move  
From him.

Hippy-Mo  
Let me go,  
Do you wish me  
To die?

He was so mean he did not condescend  
To reply. Even  
Yes or no.

## HENDECASYLLABLES

It is the very bewitching hour of eight  
Which is the moment when my new day begins,  
I love to hear the pretty clock striking eight  
I love to get up out of my bed quickly.  
Why is this? Because morning air is so cold?  
Or because of new strength that seems to come then?  
Both. And also because waking up ends dreams.

## BLACK MARCH

I have a friend,  
At the end  
Of the world.  
His name is a breath

Of fresh air.  
He is dressed in  
Grey chiffon. At least  
I think it is chiffon.

It has a  
Peculiar look, like smoke.

It wraps him round  
It blows out of place  
It conceals him  
I have not seen his face.

But I have seen his eyes, they are  
As pretty and bright  
As raindrops on black twigs  
In March, and heard him say:

I am a breath  
Of fresh air for you, a change  
By and by.

Black March I call him  
Because of his eyes  
Being like March raindrops  
On black twigs.

(Such a pretty time when the sky  
Behind black twigs can be seen  
Stretched out in one  
Uninterrupted  
Cambridge blue as cold as snow.)

But this friend  
Whatever new names I give him  
Is an old friend. He says:

Whatever names you give me  
I am  
A breath of fresh air,  
A change for you.

## GRAVE BY A HOLM-OAK

You lie there, Anna,  
In your grave now,  
Under a snow-sky,  
You lie there now.

Where have the dead gone?  
Where do they live now?  
Not in the grave, they say,  
Then where now?

Tell me, tell me,  
Is it where I may go?  
Ask not, cries the holm-oak,  
Weep, says snow.

## THE SEA-WIDOW



How fares it with you, Mrs Cooper my bride?  
*Long are the years since you lay by my side.*  
Do you wish I was back? Do you speak of me dearest?  
*I wish you were back for me to hold nearest.*  
Who then lies nearer, Mrs Cooper my bride?  
*A black man comes in with the evening tide.*  
What is his name? Tell me! How does he dare?  
*He comes uninvited His name is Despair.*

# THE STROKE

*For M.*

I was a beautiful plant  
I stood in the garden supreme  
Till there came a blight that fell on each leaf  
How I wish this had not been  
Oh I wish this had not been.

I can feel the sun, and my blighted leaves  
In an elderly way grow glad  
But oh in my depths I bleed, I bleed,  
From a heart that is youthful and sad  
From a heart that is pierced and sad.

*[The Poem as submitted to the New Statesman ended here, but, in an interview with Miss Kay Dick, Stevie Smith added the following two verses orally and they were first published in Kay Dick's Ivy and Stevie (Duckworth, 1971) Stevie did not however include them in the version included in Scorpion which she had prepared for the press before she was taken ill]*

Oh, feeling of youth, you had better go,  
You are trapped by my age and deceased too.  
Goodbye, goodbye, I will send you away,  
There is nothing here now to please you.  
Then my feeling of youth said, 'No, I will not go;  
I will comfort you with love and pain.  
And also, if you like, I can procure for you a potion  
That you will not take in vain.  
The torpor of age could not seize the notion  
To drink of the freeing grain, to measure the freeing grain.  
All the same, I should not take it if I were you,  
As you always can, but rather see life with me through.

It is not very long compared with geological time,  
It is heaven to think of geological time.  
The weights lifts . . . and this gives you a happy mind . . .

## COME, DEATH (II)

I feel ill. What can the matter be?  
I'd ask God to have pity on me,  
But I turn to the one I know, and say:  
Come, Death, and carry me away.

Ah me, sweet Death, you are the only god  
Who comes as a servant when he is called, you know,  
Listen then to this sound I make, it is sharp,  
Come, Death. Do not be slow.

## INDEX OF TITLES

- Adelaide Abner 209  
 A Dream of Comparison 175  
 A Dream of Nourishment 199  
 Advice to Young Children 97  
 A Father for a Fool 72  
 A House of Mercy 234  
 A Humane Materialist at the Burning  
   of a Heretic 155  
 A Jew is Angry with his Friend who  
   does not Believe in Circumcision  
   153  
 A King in Funeral Procession 92  
 Alfred the Great 24  
 Alone in the Woods 29  
 A Man I Am 110  
 A Mother's Hearse 124  
 I An Agnostic 201  
 Analysand 41  
 '... And the Clouds Return After the  
   Rain' 88  
 Angel Boley 251  
 Angel of Grace 45  
 Anger's Freeing Power 181  
 Après la Politique, La Haine des  
   Bourbons 113  
 Archie and Tina 264  
 II A Religious Man 202  
 A Shooting Incident 130  
 At School 211  
 A Soldier Dear to Us 246  
 Autumn 95  
 Avondale 235  
 Away, Melancholy 187  
 Bag-Snatching in Dublin 36  
 Bandol (Var) 23  
 Behind the Knight 123  
 Be Off! 104  
 Bereavement 52  
 Beware the Man 59  
 Black March 277  
 Breughel 60  
 Brickenden, Hertfordshire 72  
 But Murderous 194  
 Can it Be? 214  
 'Ceci est digne de gens sans Dieu'  
   116  
 Childe Rolandine 189  
 Christmas 120  
 Cock-a-Doo 255  
 Come, Death (I) 70  
 Come Death (II) 282  
 'Come on, Come Back' 191  
 Conviction (I) 98  
 Conviction (II) 99  
 Conviction (III) 99  
 Conviction (IV) 99  
 Cool as a Cucumber 129  
 Correspondence Between Mr  
   Harrison in Newcastle and Mr  
   Sholto Peach Harrison in Hull 34  
 Darling Daughters 62  
 Dear Female Heart 80  
 Dear Karl 76  
 Dear Little Sirmio 202  
 Death-Bed of a Financier 149  
 Death Bereaves Our Common  
   Mother/Nature Grieves for My  
   Dead Brother 36  
 Death Came to Me 38  
 Death of Mr Mounsel 53  
 Death's Ostracism 65  
 Deeply Morbid 163  
 Dido's Farewell to Aeneas 189  
 Die Lorelei 228  
 Dirge 102  
 Distractions and the Human Crowd  
   103



- Do Not! 156  
 Do Take Muriel Out 136  
 Drugs Made Pauline Vague 145  
 Egocentric 23  
 Eng. 35  
 Es war einmal 31  
 Eulenspiegelci 63  
 Evangeline or the Figure of Literary  
   Corruption, seeking Glory not  
   Truth 223  
 Every Lovely Lumb's a Desolation  
   198  
 Fafnir and the Knights 182  
 Fallen, Fallen 90  
 Farewell 229  
 Forgot! 109  
 Francesca in Winter 256  
 Freddy 46  
 From the Coptic 154  
 From the County Lunatic Asylum 33  
 Full Well I Know 162  
 Girls! 94  
 Gnädiges Fräulein 85  
 God and Man 143  
 God and the Devil 30  
 God the Drinker 196  
 Got the Eater 196  
 Grave by a Holm-Oak 279  
 'Great Unaffected Vampires and the  
   Moon' 203  
 Happiness 114  
 Harold's Leap 124  
 Hast Du Dich Verirrt? 115  
 Hendecasyllables 277  
 Happy-Mo 276  
 How do you see? 238  
 How far can you Press a Poet 26  
 How Slowly Time Lengthens 80  
 Human Affection 92  
 I Am 150  
 'I could let Tom go - but what about  
   the children?' 119  
 If I lie down 98  
 I Hate this Girl 68  
 I Like to Play with Him 40  
 In Canaan's Happy Land 78  
 Infelice 69  
 In Procreation 155  
 In the Night 111  
 In the Park 221  
 I Remember 193  
 I rode with my darling .. 142  
 Is it Wise? 47  
 It Filled My Heart with Love 201  
 Jumbo 223  
 King Hamlet's Ghost 211  
 Lady 'Rogue' Singleton 105  
 La Gretchen de Nos Jours (I) 82  
 Le Myeur Ydow 100  
 Le Désert de l'Amour 75  
 Le Revenant 148  
 Le Singe Qui Swing 138  
 Lightly Bound 148  
 Little Boy Lost 44  
 Little Boy Sick 91  
 Loin de l'Être 206  
 Longing for Death because of  
   Feebleness 217  
 Look! 218  
 Lord Barrenstock 48  
 Lord Mope 43  
 Lot's Wife 114  
 Love Me! 104  
 Magna est Veritas 220  
 Major Macroo 50  
 Man is a Spirit 127  
 Maximilian Esterhazy 50  
 Mother, among the Dustbins 74  
 Mr Over 144  
 Mrs Blow and Her Animals 260  
 Mrs Osmosis 55  
 Mrs Simpkins 25  
 Murder 93  
 My Cat Major 207  
 My Cats 145  
 My Hat 176  
 My Heart Goes Out 218  
 My Soul 79

- Nature and Free Animals 35  
 'N'est-ce pas assez de ne me point  
 hair?' 118  
 Night-Time in the Cemetery 29  
 No Categories! 141  
 No More People 115  
 No Respect 39  
 Nor We of Her to Him 259  
 Not Waving but Drowning 167  
 Nourish Me on an Egg 83  
 Numbers 32  
 Oh grateful colours, bright looks!  
 262  
 O Happy Dogs of England 61  
 Oh, If Only . 160  
 'Oh stubborn race of Cadmus'  
 seed . ' 134  
 One of Many 65  
 On the Death of a German  
 Philosopher 22  
 O Pug! 263  
 Our Bog is Dood 146  
 Out of Time 88  
 Papa Love Baby 22  
 Parents 208  
 Parrot 67  
 Persephone 134  
 Poet! 95  
 Private Means is Dead 51  
 Proud Death with Swelling Port 78  
 Quand on n'a pas ce que l'on aime,  
 il faut aimer ce que l'on a - 101  
 Rencontres Funestes 105  
 Reversionary 76  
 Road Up 54  
 Saint Anthony and the Rose of Life  
 180  
 Satin-Clad 116  
 Scorpion 236  
 Seymour and Chantelle or Un peu  
 de vice 237  
 She said 101  
 Silence and Tears 71  
 Song d'Athalie 184  
 So to fatness come 257  
 Souvenir de Monsieur Poop 83  
 Spanish School 27  
 Study to Deserve Death 102  
 Suburb 57  
 Sunt Leones 42  
 Tender Only to One 61  
 The Abominable Lake 64  
 The Actress 108  
 The After-Thought 139  
 The Airy Christ 200  
 The Ambassador 134  
 The Ass 243  
 The Bereaved Swan 33  
 The Bishops of the Church of England  
 62  
 The Blue from Heaven 171  
 The Boat 67  
 The Bottle of Aspirins 106  
 The Broken Friendship 139  
 The Castle 122  
 The Celtic Fringe 158  
 The Celts 204  
 The Children of the Cross 90  
 The Choosers 224  
 The Commuted Sentence 157  
 The Conventionalist 101  
 The Crown of Bays 151  
 The Death Sentence 157  
 The Deserter 142  
 The Devil-my-Wife 108  
 The Doctor 68  
 The Donkey 254  
 The Engine Drain 177  
 The English 210  
 The English Visitor 168  
 The Face 97  
 The Failed Spirit 118  
 The Fairy Bell 169  
 The Film Star 106  
 The Fool 115  
 The Forlorn Sea 248  
 The Friend 86  
 The Frog Prince 232  
 The Fugitive's Ride 55  
 The Galloping Cat 274

- The Ghost of Ware 166  
 The Governess 107  
 The Hat 149  
 The Hostage 185  
 The Hound of Ulster 21  
 The House of Over-Dew 268  
 The Jungle Husband 190  
 The Lads of the Village 87  
 The Lady from the Well-Spring  
     173  
 The Leader 159  
 The Light of Life 221  
 The Little Daughters of America  
     101  
 The Magic Morning 111  
 The Murderer 74  
 The New Age 170  
 The Occasional Yarrow 225  
 The Old Sweet Dove of Wiveton  
     215  
 The Orphan Reformed 130  
 The Passing Cloud 205  
 The Past 216  
 The Photograph 87  
 The Pleasures of Friendship 113  
 The Poet Him 266  
 The Poets Are Silent 113  
 The Queen and the Young Princess  
     175  
 The Reason 40  
 The Recluse 119  
 The Rehearsal 149  
 The Repentance of Lady T 108  
 The Ride 150  
 The River Deben 37  
 The River God 128  
 The River Humber 81  
 The Roman Road 121  
 The Sallow Bird 258  
 The Sea-Widow 280  
 The Singing Cat 216  
 The Sliding Mountain 118  
 The Smile 109  
 The Sorrowful Girl 225  
 The Starling 227  
 The Stroke 281  
 The Suburban Classes 27  
 The Violent Hand 92  
 The Virtuoso 100  
 The Wanderer 140  
 The Weak Monk 137  
 The White Thought 111  
 The Wild Dog 104  
 The Word 258  
 The Zoo 95  
 This Englishwoman 48  
 This is Disgraceful and Abominable  
     194  
 Thought is Superior 128  
 Thoughts about the Person from  
     Porlock 230  
 To a Dead Vole 76  
 To a Lady in a Train 209  
 To an American Publisher 149  
 To Dean Inge Lecturing on Orogen  
     123  
 Torquemada 121  
 To School! 148  
 To the Tune of the Coventry Carol  
     26  
 Touch and Go 125  
 Unpopular, lonely and loving 116  
 Unser Vater 85  
 Villains 100  
 Voices about the Princess Anemone  
     163  
 Voices against England in the Night  
     117  
 'What is she writing? Perhaps it will  
     be good' 169  
 When the Sparrow Flies 116  
 Where are you going? 94  
 Who is this Who Howls and Mutters?  
     219  
 Who Killed Lawless Lean? 53  
 Who Shot Eugenie? 160  
 Why are the Clergy...? 193  
 Will Ever? 90  
 Will Man Ever Face Fact and not  
     Feel Flat? 197  
 Wretched Woman 147

## INDEX OF FIRST LINES

- A child is born, they cry, a child 120  
 A couple of women is one too many 115  
 Across the bridge across the dyke 55  
 A dark rose grew in the desert 180  
 Adelaide Abner is cruel 209  
 A dismal bell hung in the belfry 169  
 Admirals Curse-You and No-More 101  
 All the waters of the river Deben 37  
 Alone in the woods I felt 29  
 A mother slew her unborn babe 194  
 An antique story comes to me 228  
 Angel most cynical 92  
 Archie and Tina 264  
 A sallow bird sat on a tree 258  
 A thousand and fifty-one waves 32  
 At school I always walk with Elwyn 211  
 Away, melancholy 187  
  
 Bandol (Var) 23  
 Behind the Knight sits hooded Care 123  
 Beware the man whose mouth is small 59  
  
 Can it be, can it be 214  
 'Children who paddle where the ocean bed shelves steeply'  
     97  
 Christ died for God and me 98  
 Cold as no love, and wild with all negation 101  
 Cold as No Plea 157  
 Coleridge received the Person from Porlock 230  
 Come, wed me, Lady Singleton 105  
 Cool as a cucumber calm as a mill pond sound as a bell 129  
 Count Flanders 113  
  
 Dark was the day for Childe Rolandine the artist 189  
 Darling daughters, listen to your mother 62  
 Deal not with me God as I have dealt with Man 149  
 Dearest Evelyn, I often think of you 190  
 Dear female heart, I am sorry for you 80  
 Dear Karl, I send you Walt Whitman in a sixpenny book  
     76

Dear little Sirmio 202  
 Death came to me and said 38  
 Deep in the mysterious waters of the lake a world lies  
     drowned 64  
 Deeply morbid deeply morbid was the girl who typed the  
     letters 163  
 Donnez à manger aux affamées 106  
 Do not despair of man, and do not scold him 156  
 Do take Muriel out 136  
 Drugs made Pauline vague 145

'Eh bien ! Marche !', fit le Majeur Ydow 100  
 England, you had better go 117

Fair waved the golden corn 78  
 Farewell dear friends 229  
 Farewell for ever, well for ever fare 93  
 Far from normal far from normal far from normal I am  
     150  
 Fourteen-year-old, why must you giggle and dote 101  
 From a friend's friend I taste friendship 102  
 Full well I know the flinty heart 162

Girls ! although I am a woman 94  
 God and the Devil 30

Happiness is silent, or speaks equivocally for friends 114  
 Harold, are you asleep? 124  
 He blinks he sighs 92  
 He chases his tail 41  
 He is quite captive to the Lady of the Well-Spring 173  
 He often gazes on the air 201  
 He said no word of her to us 259  
 He says that religious thought and all our nerviness 202  
 He told his life story to Mrs Courtly 95  
 He trod in dream upon the brim 65  
 He wrote *The I and the It* 22  
 Honour and magnify this man of men 24  
 How do you see the Holy Spirit of God? 238  
 How far can you press a poet 26  
 How fares it with you, Mrs Cooper my bride 280  
 How nice it is to slink the streets at night 57  
 How slowly time lengthens from a hated event 80  
 How sweet the birds of Avondale 235

I admire the Bishops of the Church of England 62  
 I always admire a beautiful woman 149

I am a frog 232  
 I am becalmed in a deep sea 218  
 I am dying Egypt dying 53  
 I am not God's little lamb 91  
 I am sorry to say my dear wife is a dreamer 104  
 I am that Persephone 134  
 I am the self-appointed guardian of English literature 83  
 I can't say I enjoyed it, but the pay was good 108  
 I cry I cry 141  
 I fear the ladies and gentlemen under the trees 105  
 I feel a mortal isolation 198  
 I feel ill What can the matter be 282  
 If I lie down upon my bed I must be here 98  
 I had a dream of nourishment 199  
 I had a dream three walls stood up wherein a raven bird  
     181  
 I had a sweet bird 276  
 I hate this girl 68  
 I have a friend 277  
 I have lived and followed my fate without flinching,  
     followed it gladly 189  
 I have no respect for you 39  
 I like to get off with people 99  
 I like to play with him 40  
 I like to see him drink the gash 196  
 I like to toss him up and down 145  
 I longed for companionship rather 111  
 I long for the desolate valleys 114  
 'I look at the bottle when mournful I feel' 106  
 I look in the glass 108  
 I look in the mirror 166  
 I love my beautiful hat more than anything 149  
 I love to hear the cock crow in 255  
 I married the Earl of Egremont 122  
 I may be smelly and I may be old 128  
 In a shower of tears I sped my fears 88  
 In his fur the animal rode, and in his fur he strove 201  
 In protocreations 155  
 In the cold light of morning she was looking rather queer  
     85  
 In the flame of the flickering fire 79  
 In the graveyard, in the graveyard 168  
 In the quiet waters 182  
 In the wood of Wallow 243  
 I raised my gun 31  
 I rode with my darling in the dark wood at night 142  
 I shall be glad to be silent, Mother, and hear you speak 111

Is it wise 47  
 I think of the Celts as rather a whining lady 204  
 I thought as I lay on my bed one night, I am only a passing  
     cloud 205  
 It is a formal and deserted garden 88  
 It is the bird of burial 134  
 It is the very bewitching hour of eight 277  
 It seemed a curious place to rest one's body and take one's  
     ease 54  
 It was a dream and shouldn't I bother about a dream 184  
 It was a graveyard scene. The crescent moon 203  
 It was a house of female habitation 234  
 It was a little captive cat 216  
 It was a mile of greenest grass 225  
 It was my bridal night I remember 193  
 It was such a pretty little donkey 254  
 It was the mighty Engine Drain, the Engine Drain, the  
     Engine Drain 177  
 It was the War 246  
 I walked abroad in Easter Park 99  
 I want to be your pinkie 75  
 I was a beautiful plant 281  
 I was consumed by so much hate 110  
 I was talking one day 45  
 I will forgive you everything 35  
 I will never leave you darling 227

Jumbo, Jumbo, Jumbo darling, Jumbo come to Mother  
     223

Kathleen ni Houlihan 158  
 King Arthur rode in another world 171

Lamb dead, dead lamb 36  
 Left by the ebbing tide of battle 191  
 Let all the little poets be gathered together in classes 148  
 Listen, all of you, listen, all of you 123  
 Little boy 21  
 Little Master Home-from-School 72  
 Lord Barrenstock and Epicene 48  
 Love me, Love me, I cried to the rocks and the trees 104

Major Hawkey Cole Macroo 50  
 Major is a fine cat 207  
 Man does not live by bread alone 130  
 Man is a spirit. This the poor flesh knows 127  
 Man is coming out of the mountains 125

Man is my darling, my love and my pain 143  
 Many of the English 210  
 Maria Holt 52  
 Men fear the hollow men at the top of the tree 159  
 Mother, among the dustbins and the manure 74  
 Mother, I love you so 92  
 Mother, mother, let me go 175  
 Mother said if I wore this hat 176  
 Mr Over is dead 144  
 Mrs Osmosis 55  
 Mrs Simpkins never had very much to do 25  
 My child, my child, watch how he goes 115  
 My heart goes out to my Creator in love 218  
 'My heart is fallen in despair' 139  
 My heart leaps up with streams of joy 258  
 My life is vile 40  
 My mother was a romantic girl 22  
 My soul within the shades of night 119  
 My true love breathed her latest breath 74  
 My Uncle from the realms of Death 148  
  
 Never again will I weep 44  
 Nobody heard him, the dead man 167  
 Nobody knows what I feel about Freddy 46  
 Nourish me on an egg, Nanny 83  
 No wonder 81  
 Now Vole art dead 76  
  
 Of all the disgraceful and abominable things 194  
 O happy dogs of England 61  
 Oh cold and ferocious are the children of the cross 90  
 Oh ho uncircumcised Sadducee I see 153  
 Oh I am a cat that likes to 274  
 Oh Lion in a peculiar guise 121  
 Oh where are you going ye human faces 94  
 Oh would that I were a reliable spirit careering about 217  
 O love sweet love 256  
 O Maximilian stern and wild 50  
 O Pug, some people do not like you 263  
 Ormerod was deeply troubled 103  
 Our Bog is dood, our Bog is dood 146  
 Our Princess married 249  
 Outside the house 138  
 Over-dew 268  
  
 Parents who barely can afford it 208  
 Passing at my pleasure's pace 115



People who are always praising the past 216  
Poet, thou art dead and damned 95  
Poor human race that must 257  
Poor noble Ghost that comes from place of pain 211  
Private means is dead 51  
Profit and Batten 100  
Proud Death with swelling port comes ruffling by 78  
Pull my arm back, Seymour 237  
Put out that Light 221

Rapunzel Rapunzel let down your hair 139  
Riding slowly along the banks of a canal 150

Satin-clad, with many a pearl 116  
Shall I tell you the signs of a New Age coming 170  
She said as she tumbled the baby in 101  
She's not Indian, she's ill 209  
Sholto Peach Harrison you are no son of mine 34  
Shut me not alive away 157  
Since what you want, not what you ought 119  
Sisley 36  
Sitting alone on a summer's evening 72  
Stand off, Mother, let me go! 118  
Study to deserve Death, they only may 102

Tender only to one 61  
The ages blaspheme 60  
The angel that rebellion raised 90  
The boating party 111  
The boat took my love away 67  
The City Dog goes to the drinking trough 104  
The foolish poet wonders 266  
The funeral path is hung with snow 29  
The grass is green 262  
The intellectual Englishman shrank away from the bedside  
160  
The lads of the village, we read in the lay 87  
The lion dishonoured bids death come 76  
The lion sits within his cage 95  
The lions who ate the Christians on the sands of the arena  
42  
The love of a mother for her child 124  
The milky love of this bland child 107  
The monk sat in his den 137  
The nearly right 26  
The nervous face of my dear wife 108  
The old sick green parrot 67

The orphan is looking for parents 130  
 The painters of Spain 27  
 The parrot 53  
 The people say that spiritism is a joke and a swizz 33  
 The pleasures of friendship are exquisite 113  
 The portrait of my mother 100  
 There is a face I know too well 97  
 There is a fearful solitude 109  
 There is a god in whom I do not believe 196  
 There is far too much of the suburban classes 27  
 There's no new spirit abroad 113  
 There was a dog called Clanworthy 260  
 There was a wicked woman called Malady Festing 251  
 The rocks and trees in silence stood 197  
 These hands so well articulated 116  
 The shadow was so black 99  
 The tears of the widow of the military man 71  
 The terrors of the scenery 118  
 The wood was rather old and dark 44  
 The world is come upon me, I used to keep it a long way  
     off 142  
 They gave him a crown of bays and dressed him up 151  
 They photographed me young upon a tiger skin 87  
 Thus Englishwoman was so refined 48  
 'Thus night shall thy soul be required of thee' 236  
 Thought is superior to dress and circumstance 128  
 Three angels came to the red red clay 154  
 To be so cold and not yet old 63  
 To those who are isolate 118  
 'Twas the voice of the sweet dove 215  
 'Twas the voice of the wanderer, I heard her exclaim 140  
 Two ladies walked on the soft green grass 175  
  
 Uncle Torquemada 121  
 Underneath the broad hat is the face of the Ambassador  
     134  
 Underneath the tangled tree 163  
 Unpopular, lonely and loving 116  
 Unser Vater 85  
  
 Walking one day in the park in winter 221  
 Walking swiftly with a dreadful duchess 69  
 Wan 33  
 We had ridden three days Eugenie and I 160  
 We needs must love the highest when we see it 86  
 What care I if good God be 23  
 What has happened to the young men of Eng. 35

What is she writing? Perhaps it will be good 169  
What shall we say of this curious young man 43  
When ancient girl is garbed in spite 109  
When shall that fuel fed fire grow fatter 155  
When the sparrow flies to the delicate branch 116  
Who is this that comes in splendour, coming from the  
blazing East 200  
Who is this that howls and mutters 219  
Who shall we send to fetch him away 224  
Why are the clergy of the Church of England 193  
Why dost thou dally, Death, and tarry on the way 70  
Wicked and corrupt 223  
Will ever the stormy seas and the surges deep 90  
With my looks I am bound to look simple or fast I would  
rather look simple 220  
Would he might come 82  
Wretched woman that thou art 147

You are not looking at all well, my dear 68  
You are only one of many 65  
You beastly child, I wish you had miscarried 148  
You don't look at all well, quite loin de l'être in fact 206  
You hang at dawn, they said 185  
You lie there, Anna 279  
You say I must write *another* book? But I've just written  
this one 149



## MORE ABOUT PENGUINS AND PELICANS

*Penguinews*, which appears every month, contains details of all the new books issued by Penguins as they are published. From time to time it is supplemented by our stocklist which includes around 5,000 titles

A specimen copy of *Penguinews* will be sent to you free on request. Please write to Dept EP, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, for your copy.

*In the U S A.:* For a complete list of books available from Penguins in the United States write to Dept CS, Penguin Books, 625 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

*In Canada* For a complete list of books available from Penguins in Canada write to Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 2801 John Street, Markham, Ontario L3R 1B4.